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ISSUE 2 Christmas 1996 £2.95

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WORTH OF PRIZES INSIDE!

The truth is in here! **THE X ISSUE**

We open our
very own
X Files and
reveal the
five hot
titles for
this Xmas

XPOSED!

wipEout2097 players' guide
Exclusive Crash Bandicoot hints & tips
10 Ways To Win At Twisted Metal



TOMB RAIDER DESTRUCTION DERBY 2 DISRUPTOR BROKEN SWORD STAR GLADIATOR MK TRILOGY NASCAR 96

DISRUPTOR™



It's no picnic.

Experience the new game from *Interplay*™ that knocks the *stuffing* out of other shoot 'em ups!



PLAYSTATION PRO

(R)ather than doing a normal double page spread advertisement like the one you saw at the beginning of last month's issue, Interplay has produced this daft one-and-a-third page thing, thus leaving me, Editor and all-round 'fill text here' monkey to make good the space. Not that I'm complaining, though, because without the likes of Interplay coughing up ludicrous lucre for ad space there wouldn't be a mag at all. At least that's what our ad sales team reckon. Personally, I think you'll buy this because of the quality of the editorial, rather than the flashiness (and awkward size) of the adverts. By the way, if you're hoping I'll finally get around to telling you what's in the mag, forget it, just turn the page and you'll find the contents. Actually, no, don't. Buy the mag first, take it home, then read it or else you'll never know what's going on in the wonderful world of the PlayStation. After all, this is a newsagent's, not a library...

Alex

DISRUPTOR™

**A blood boiling,
ball blasting,
brain bashing,
limb trashing,
teeth grinding,
nerve breaking,
soft wee teddy
blasted to little
pieces mother of
a shoot 'em up.**



"Disruptor... is a challenging, atmospheric and at times, bloody terrifying experience." 8/10

Official Playstation

"It's just too much. Doom I could handle. Even Alien Trilogy came and went without too much trouble. But Disruptor has too many levels to explore, too many aliens to fight. I don't think I can last much longer!"

Playstation Plus

"Imagine my delight when Disruptor arrives looking completely cool, sounding smart, and playing like a god-damned action fest!"

"A right old corker" Mean Machines Playstation

Interplay

It's no picnic.

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74 King Konami

Wanna know what good old Konami has up its sleeves for the forthcoming months? Well you'll be glad to know we've got the lot, right here, right now

78 Xing up a storm

Interplay steps back in time and drags the classic shoot'em-up, Tempest X into the next generation. Which ties in nicely with our special X issue

80 Acclaim mixes it up

Your chance to view Batman Arcade, The Crow: City Of Angels and a few other treat movie licence thangs in this whopping preview spesh

84 Adventures In Lemmingland

Those Lemmings are back! Thankfully though, they've stepped into the realm of the platform game as opposed to jumping off cliffs. Hurrah!

88 Sporting In The Free World

Take a look at Penny Racers, Namco Tennis and the funky Porsche racer that Sony have lined up for you. They're all absolutely amazing. Ooh, they are

94 Don't Be Soft, Have A Fight!

We pull GT Interactive's best beat'em-up ever under the spotlight (War Gods) plus have a quick poke around the magical Hexen

96 Please Wait... Re-Loading

Gremlin's original 3-D, top down blaster was a massive hit with the PlayStation crowd, so much so that its got a stunning sequel ready to rock

Solutions 98

98 wipEout2097 Masterclass

Our resident space cadet, Bud Sputnik, takes you through the complex innards of one of the best racing games on the planet. Hidden tracks, power ups, shortcuts and everything

104 10 Ways To Win...

Sony's amazing Crash Bandicoot receives some good wholesome tippage from the Pros this month, plus we give you the chance to win some excellent prizes worth over £600!

106 20 Ways To Win...

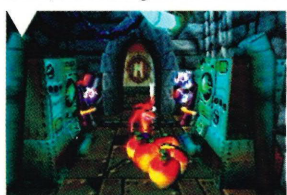
...Twisted Metal! Yes, the ancient but highly recommended shooting and driving extravaganza gets pulled to bits as we tip you 'til you pop!

PREVIEWED
ReLoaded

Mamma wanna play! 96

TIPPED
Crash Bandicoot

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Full track guide inside 98

REVIEWED Tomb Raider One girl and her gun 42

News 6

Fact, fiction and... The Spice Girls?

We spread the Christmas cheer this month and take you on a snow covered winter wonderland journey through the crazy world of the PlayStation. Read on for information on BMG's Pandemonium, 10 ways to have a merry little Xmas with your console, Tribal Gathering goodies, Anco Player Manager, the return of Bubsy the Bobcat, UEFA Soccer and more. Plus you'll discover why the hell we've got the Spice Girls in our mag. Strange but true...

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Get PSPro at a low low price!

This is your chance to get the mag for miles cheaper than you would get it in the shops, plus you'll get a free Gremlin PlayStation game for your trouble!

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Prizes worth over £6,000 simply must be given away this month! We've all gone completely bonkers!

61 X-COM Bonanza!

Read the review, drool over how good it all looks and then enter this top compo and walk away with loads of X-COM goodies

76 Cheesy Peas!

Ocean is about to release the platform mouse with attitude onto your console this Xmas. Help out by getting your grubby mitts on £1,000 worth of top-of-the-range Sharp camcorder goodness

103 wipEout2097 Giveaway!

Psygnosis gave us the complete guide and an excellent competition to go with it. So buckle up, complete the game and then win some free stuff

105 Bandicoot Booty!

Fancy some free shirts? How about a copy of the game then? Still interested? If so, read on and while you're at it you could win Sony Hi-Fi equipment worth £500

110 Awesome Eyewear!

Look real cool this winter when you win some expensive and down right funky Adidas shades



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12 Soviet Strike

The world famous 16-bit Strike series goes from strength to strength with EA's missile-pumping search-and-destroy stunner

16 Steel Harbinger

Dress like a bondage queen and try to save the globe from certain destruction in Mindscape's latest roam around blaster

20 Street Fighter Alpha 2

Capcom kicks in with yet another addition to the SF2 family tree. Just as you thought it was all over, Ken, Ryu and the gang come back for more

24 Star Gladiator

The beat'em-up angle swings from two to three as Capcom unveils what has to be its most graphically supreme and all-round best beat'em-up ever

28 Warhammer: Shadow Of The Horned Rat

Goblins, Orcs, big bearded blokes waving huge swords about - it's all in here as Mindscape takes you on a journey into the crazy world of the strategy game

32 Mortal Kombat Trilogy

Three massive fighting titles all on one CD, but is it three times the fun? We put GT Interactive's ultimate battling box set under the microscope

34 Supersonic Racers

You're gonna have to wait until next year for Micro Machines V3, so why not kill some driving time with Mindscape's multiplayer miniature racer?

38 X2

Project X has given birth to an all-out eye candy explosion, featuring some of the hottest and hardest shoot'em-up action around. See how it rates with us hardened gamers inside...

42 Tomb Raider

Core Design manages to put the awesome Resident Evil firmly in the shade with this stunning action adventure romp. Lara Croft kicks ass!

46 Robotron X

The old arcade classic from yesteryear gets a PlayStation revamp thanks to the boys at GT Interactive. We put it through its paces inside

50 Street Racer

This was created for the SNES a few years back. UBISoft has finally got around to producing this bigger and better version for your favourite console

54 Destruction Derby 2

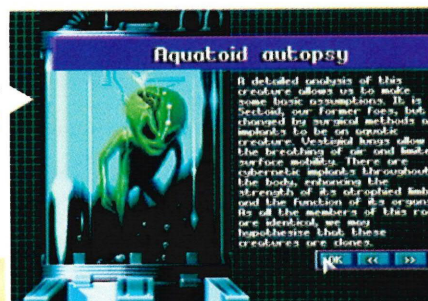
Crash! Bang! Wallop! What a corker! Psygnosis takes it to the next level with yet another damn fine remake of a classic original

58 X-COM: Terror From The Deep

Microprose urges you to live under the sea and hunt for aliens over a period of years in this, its second X-COM adventure for the PlayStation

REVIEWED X-COM 2

Underwater alien lifeforms 58



REVIEWED Destruction Derby 2

Smash cars, drive like a nutter... 54



REVIEWED Street Racer

Eight player racing action 50

62 NHL '97

EA Sports knocks out yet another hockey game with a new number on the end of the title just in time for winter. Will it receive a frosty reception from our team or will we snuggle up to it near an open log fire? Find out inside

64 Dismal

Fed up with friendly ghosts, Interplay takes a stab at the already overcrowded Doom market with this mind bending first person perspective shooter

66 Broken Sword

This point-and-click cartoon adventure has been one of the high points of this month's issue, absorbing anyone who goes near it. A full review awaits...

70 Nascar Racing '96

Get your motor running and tear across the tracks in this fine port-over of a world famous PC classic. It goes like the clappers with the top down too!

72 Blast Chamber

Activision's 3-D cuboid chaos engine finally pops in for a full review. Running around with dynamite strapped to your back has never been so much fun

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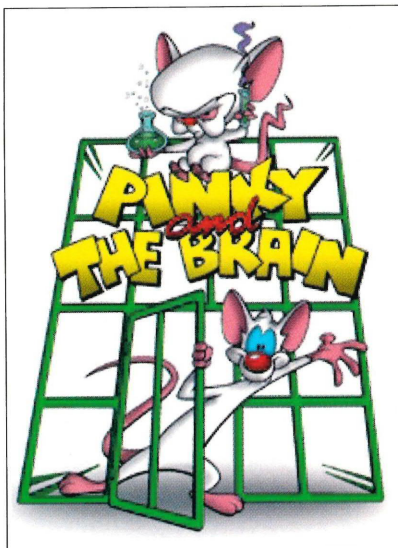


Cartoon Capers

Anything with the name Spielberg associated with it is going to be big and fortunately for new cartoon duo Pinky and his mate The Brain, the bearded one has his finger well and truly in their pie so to speak. And who better to bring them to life on your PlayStation than gaming giant Konami.

No screenshots are available just yet but details of the gameplay have just been released. The game is a 3-D interactive cartoon (three words that usually strike fear into the hearts of games reviewers the world over) in which you control **Pinky and The Brain** through a variety of action adventures. As Brain you even get to travel through time in order to take over the world!

Konami are promising a 3-D world (isn't everyone these days?), multiple styles of gameplay, the chance to use either Pinky or Brain (each of which has different abilities) and multiple paths through the game to completion. This is still some way off at the moment, spring '97 being the expected release date, giving you plenty of time to start getting excited.



In our day, it was all acme this and acme that. A cartoon was a cartoon, not a blinkin' interactive adventure game



Imagine the following - a tall, lumbering man with a deep voice and stubble is dressed as a nurse and he's carrying a canister of laughing gas



Ooh Matron etc.

No you didn't read it wrong. If you thought running a Theme Park was a bizarre idea for a computer game, how about running a hospital? You'll have complete control over all aspects of managing a successful unit and will have to worry about things such as keeping waiting lists down, and other such strange tasks. As you'd expect if you've played Theme Park, **Theme Hospital** is a semi serious business sim with tongue stuck firmly in cheek. You need to take the job seriously if you don't want patients dying left, right and centre. It'd be difficult to get too depressed while playing a game where the crises you face include a psychiatric ward full of Elvis impersonators or an out patients department full of people suffering from a nasty affliction known as Hairy-itis. If you've ever fancied becoming a hospital administrator, this is the game for you. Expect to see it early next year (but don't hold your breath). Let's hope someone gives the Tories a copy. They might learn a thing or two.

More news the 'Wars

As mentioned in last month's news, Bullfrog's **Syndicate Wars** is finally on its way. To be published by Electronic Arts and released in January, this game isn't a straightforward battle between good and evil. In a welcome departure from the vast majority of arcade/strategy blasters, players can pin the colours of either the EuroCorp Syndicate or the Church of the New Epoch to their mast. Watch out for the stunning 'dynamic lighting' system which allows for shooting and subterfuge in the shadows.

There are numerous individual characters in the game, ranging from special agents to world-beating scientists and mercenary

Syndicate operatives blessed with special abilities. Planning your assaults, we're reliably informed by staff at Bullfrog, is the best way, but there's still abattoir-loads of mindless violence though.

The combat doesn't just take place on Earth. Do well enough for either faction and you may find yourself heading off to an orbital space station.

When it finally hits the shelves, **Syndicate Wars** will have a two player link-up - it'll be interesting to see how this works in practice on a 3-D isometric play area. Find out if it's all been worth the wait in next month's **PlayStation Pro**.

There are over a dozen types of vehicle in **Syndicate Wars**, including ships. You can steal and control taxis, punk bikes, armoured trucks, personnel carriers, cars and even twin-rocket firing siege tanks



The Next Generation Game

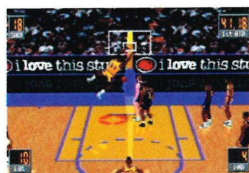
GameGen II for Windows NT will give PC-based games developers a level of creativity once exclusive to users of high-end Unix workstations. By introducing GameGen II to the Windows NT platform, MultiGen has shattered the cost of realtime 3D games development. GameGen II allows developers to create realtime games, enabling players limitless interaction with 3D worlds. GameGen II for Windows NT is the first authoring application to enable development of complex interactive 3D worlds on affordable PC workstations. GameGen II is optimised to develop content for next generation consoles such as the PlayStation. An essential component of the 3D games development process, GameGen II's point and click menus of authoring and editing tools accelerate the production cycle of interactive 3D game titles. GameGen II has already been a success on Silicon Graphics workstations with the creation of titles such as *Twisted Metal*, *Warhawk* and *Cyberia*. Dennis Yeo, President of MultiGen, remarked, 'By the end of 1997 there will be an estimated 20 million games consoles and PCs with the power to run realtime 3D games. The present opportunity is not unlike the introduction of 'talkies' to the Hollywood film industry... we are about to see a revolution in both game content and development.'



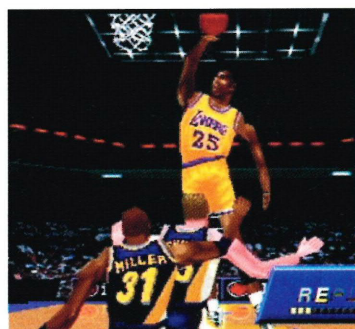
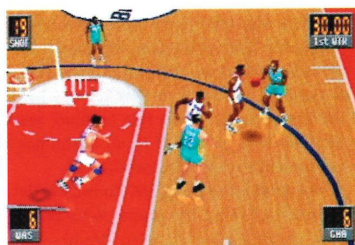
Hot Rim Dunking Action!

Great news from Konami is that the office favourite basketball game, NBA In the Zone is to get a sequel, cunningly entitled NBA In the Zone 2. Expect more of the same, only better of course, with new features including several different dunk shots, full season and playoff modes (a feature sadly missing from the original), a new stamina factor affecting the players as the game progresses, fake shots, the ability to create your own player and a whole host of other stuff which doesn't sound as impressive but should improve the game no end!

NBA In the Zone 2 has no definite release date as of yet but Konami is confident it can get it out before Christmas in America at least. We suppose that means it should reach these shores early next year.



I've got tattoos all over, my hair's green & I won't go down on Madonna!

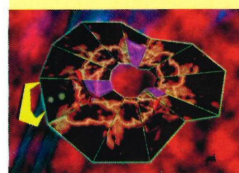


coming soon...

DEATHTRAP DUNGEON

Based on the Fighting Fantasy books by Ian Livingstone, Deathtrap

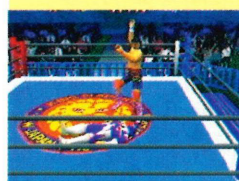
Dungeon is sure to set roleplaying PlayStation fans hearts aflutter. Eidos reckons that the combat system is fast and easy to use and the levels are modelled in full 3-D, creating a dungeon full of traps, orcs, zombies, dragons and other mythical delights.



TEMPEST X

The latest instalment in the Tempest experience offers substantial

innovative new features not seen in its predecessors. The most notable of these is the incredible graphic effects. With its animation cycles running at a rapid-fire 60 frames a second, and the uniquely designed, texture-mapped webs to enhance the game's visual impact even further, Tempest X promises a feast for all PlayStation owners.



POWER MOVE PRO WRESTLING

Activision is confident that it'll be a big hit over here

after Jap equivalent Toukon Retsuden shipped 250,000 units in the land of the rising sun. Efforts have been made to create a life-like professional wrestling game, so a responsive control method has been set up to pull off the right moves at the right time. Realism is one of the main qualities that Activision hopes to portray, so the moves aren't 'special', they're just good, old-fashioned reversals, pile drivers and uppercuts.

FIFA '97

EA is trying the old 'Get it out in the shops before anyone realises it's not that good'

routine on us here. You see, EA normally sends us review copies well in advance of their release if they're any good. Buy next month's mag to see if our hunch is correct, or whether it needs corrective surgery.

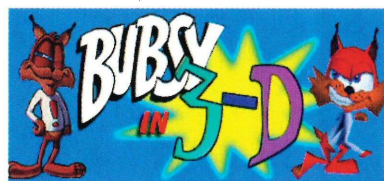
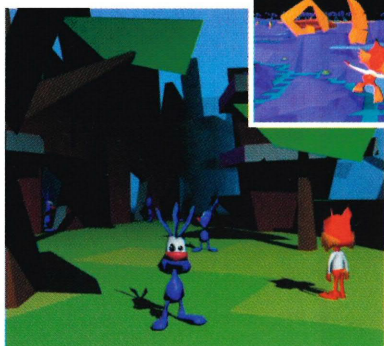
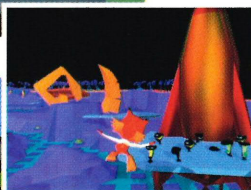
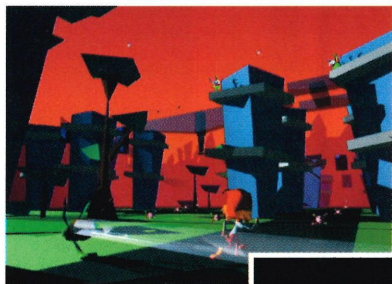


Return of the Cat

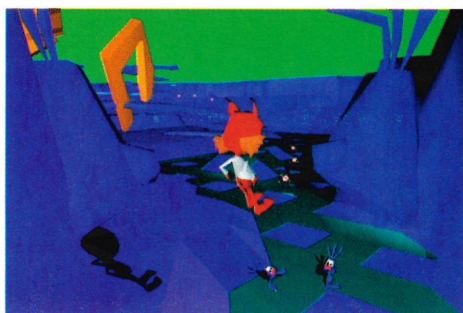
Remember Bubsy? You do! You must do! He was dead popular three or so years ago on the SNES. Well anyway, he's back, and this time there's none of that linear 2-D nonsense. For this outing everyone's favourite video game feline has been blessed with another dimension, and a good job too because the post crash PlayStation market would undoubtedly have scoffed had it been anything less and sent Bubsy skulking home with his tail between his legs.

Thing is though, Cheesey was 3-D as well and unless everything goes according to plan simply having a trio of dimensions instead of the usual brace can turn out to be hindrance rather than a help, as happened with Ocean's effort. Will Bubsy go the same when it's released, hopefully in December? Only time will tell for sure. Actual game details are sketchy at the moment, but what we can do is show you some stunning screenshots and tell you that the finished product will more than likely have 17 huge levels all played out in a fully 3-D environment.

We've played an early version and all we're saying is that the game shows great potential, and if it's fully realised Telstar has got a definite Christmas smash on its hands. Let's hope it gets it right then.



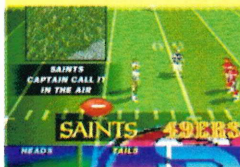
In some ways, Bubsy 3D looks like the amazing Mario 64. In other ways, however, it looks like a nightmare. Beauty is in the eye of the beholder, however, so if it ever reaches the shops try before you buy



coming soon...

NBA LIVE '97

As long as tall blokes and Nike exist, there'll always be basketball. And as long as the PlayStation exists, there'll always be another basketball game around the corner. NBA Live '96 was a success inasmuch as it actually managed to shift a few copies in the face of stiffer opposition than an army of zombies. Entering an already overcrowded genre, NBA Live '97 will have to pump its air soles up to the max to make sure it doesn't get dissed by its rivals. Or something. Reviewed next issue.



MADDEN '97

America's national sport (unfortunately) lends itself well to

console simulations and, like the basketball genre, there's plenty of competition in this field. The Madden series, however, has consistently proved to be solid and dependable as an honest-to-goodness gridiron fest. See next month's *PlayStation Pro* for an in-depth review.

PLAYER MANAGER

We knew it wouldn't be long before a competitor came long for Telstar's rather average football management simulation, Onside. Anco's Player Manager promises to be a simulation of 'unparalleled depth'. Featuring all four English divisions, promotion and relegation, domestic and European Cup competitions, it could well be the first PlayStation footy management game to really catch on. Reviewed next in next month's issue, you can't afford to miss it.

Best Killer

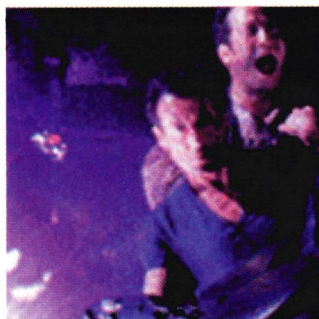
We can exclusively reveal that *Perfect Assassin*, out now on PC CD-Rom, is to blast its way onto the PlayStation next year. Taking the role of Charon, the perfect assassin, who has had his memory almost completely wiped, your first task is to find out who you are. Once this is done, you can start working out what to do in the hostile environment of the Kobrai Citadel.

Kev Walker, leading UK fantasy artist, is the brains behind the game. With credits such as 2000AD and Judge Dredd - The Movie, Kev's calibre is immediately far more credible than some faceless programmer or other who hasn't left his bedroom since the onset of adolescence. Featuring a unique level of AI, there are over 200 characters to interact with. Thankfully, the plot is completely non-linear and evolves at a pace you dictate - for example if you interact with a character of limited intelligence when seeking vital information, you won't progress as quickly as if you had questioned a more intelligent citizen.

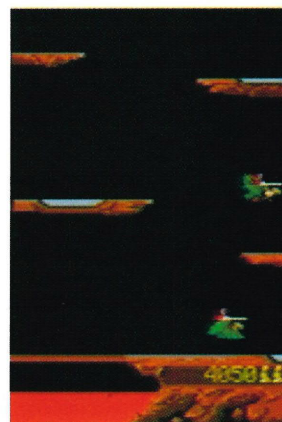
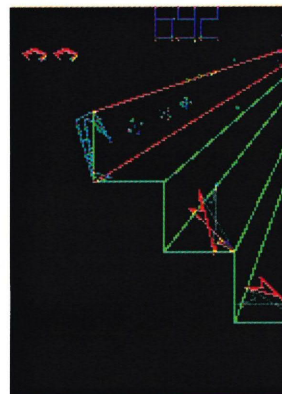
Next month's *PSP* will contain exclusive artwork and development information on *Perfect Assassin* - Grolier Interactive's first bid at making a killer impact on the PlayStation.



Scenes from Judge Dredd - The Movie, which *Perfect Assassin*'s Kev Walker worked on



Tempest - a retro gaming classic if ever there was one. Read all about the new version in the preview section



This time next year we'll be millionaires!

If setting up a railroad's your bag, MicroProse has a game that'll allow you to do just that. Set in 1930 it presents you with a game world made up of numerous small towns and raw material resources. You're given £100,000 and with it you've got to prove yourself by setting the wheels in motion so to speak and becoming a fully fledged *Transport Tycoon*. Business management sims can become a bit heavy at times and so far they haven't really worked all that well on the PlayStation. Hopefully this will reverse the trend with it's pleasant looking graphics and of course, the MicroProse stamp of approval.

See that ship? I earned that ship through years of solid graft my son

Stop Press

■ Kagemasa Kozuki, head of Japan's Computer Entertainment Software Association (CESA), has revealed that a code of ethics is about to be adopted by the 90 members of the CESA and hopes to add many more adopters. This hasn't come a

moment too soon, as over 200 software houses have produced games featuring graphic sex and violence. The CESA also plans to tackle the problem of obscene game programs sold in Japanese convenience stores. The only obscene things sold in convenience stores in England are Wispa Gold bars and Diet Lit.

■ Nichimen Graphics, with assistance from Electronic Arts' Euro studio, has designed a new motion capture editing system. Nichimen claims that productivity 'dramatically increases' in the development process from design to output. Motion capture data can now be used with various sized skeletons. Improved tools allow

artists to morph their own poses with motion capture data, the enhancements a direct result of EA's contribution. The tools also let animators use traditional animation techniques in conjunction with motion capture.

■ Navio Communications aims to spread Web technology around game players, televisions, telephones and



Don't ban this. It isn't
real and wouldn't hurt
a fly. Unless you
swatted it

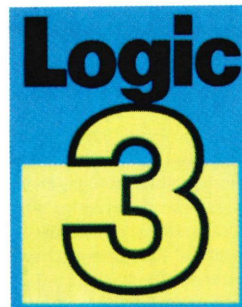
Gun Law

Purveyor of quality PlayStation peripherals, Logic 3 now has a Christmas line-up of six peripherals to reinforce its standing as the number one console add-on manufacturer.

In the wake of recent gun-related outcry, it only seems fitting that *PlayStation Pro* should give some column inches to its most controversial piece – the **Predator gun**. Safer than the safest of safe houses, the Predator fires a safe beam of light at your telly/monitor screen to enjoy safe gun toting in the comfort and safety of your own home.

Although if used as a truncheon it would probably do some damage, as a gun it's as safe as they come. Ban all guns bar this one. Its safe. And costs £29.99. Want one?

Write to *PlayStation Pro* saying what punishment gun-toting murderers should receive and we'll give away an ultra-safe Predator gun to the senders of the best three suggestions. Look out for a peripheral special next month, when all the add-ons we've ever had sent in are given a thorough test and rated accordingly.



Wetro!

HMV Level One's **Retro Gaming Exhibition** came to an abrupt halt on its penultimate day when the shop's emergency sprinklers were accidentally set off, showering 'ye olde' consoles and soaking a further £20,000 worth of video and computer game stock. Red-faced staff were left to mop the floor of the Oxford Street store and man the embarrassingly placed crush barriers to prevent any shoppers keen for nostalgia from splashing through in-store puddles.

November 1 had been scheduled for an auction of such retro hardware delights as the Intellivision, the Mattelaquarius and the Atari VCS. Unfortunately, for the PlayStation Pro team and many other disappointed game fans the auction was cancelled, the show was prematurely terminated and all the old hardware was safely stored away. In the dry.

Joust (below left) and Pole Position (below) are two classic retro titles available on PlayStation compilations



MICRO PROSE

Sid Meier defects

Industry 'name' Sid Meier, erstwhile MicroProse guru of F-15 Strike Eagle, Pirates and Railroad Tycoon fame has signed up for Electronic Arts. When asked about his decision to defect, he replied: 'There was a kind of obligation with MicroProse to produce certain types of product within a fixed time frame. Before starting Firaxis we made the decision that we didn't want to get into being a publisher, so we talked to a lot of existing publishers and got a lot of offers. EA's was the best so we went with them.'

'We started Firaxis to enable us to put into practice lots of things we have tried out in the last four or five years. With this new company I have the time to put together the kind of product we can all be totally happy about. We want to move things forward, but most of the games will still be in the same genre as you'd expect from myself and the others.'

On the subject of the 'next generation', Meier has strong views. 'We don't want to be doing 3-D for 3-D's sake. We're not against it at all, we just look at things on a game-by-game basis. The gameplay in *Civilisation II* would not have changed much if it had been in 3-D and that's got to be the deciding factor with that kind of decision.'

As for multi-player games, Meier had this to say: 'Multi-player is great but it's not one of these things I think is a must. When it all works properly then maybe we'll look at it a little closer, when it's a genre in its own right. If we did do a game with a multi-player option then that would be the main feature of the game, not an extra... I'm more interested in gameplay and depth.'



set-top boxes. Netscape owns a major stake in the company which is to work on making existing Internet content viewable on such devices and then work on evolving the use of the Internet through these areas. Navio has already begun working with Sony, Nintendo and Sega to bring the Net to console owners. ■ ASCII is developing a 3-D joystick.

The company has licensed the Spaceball technology from Spacetec IMC. ASCII will use Spacetec's expertise to perfect the first joystick of its kind for the PlayStation. Hide Irie, President of ASCII, pointed out that 'Controllers haven't changed significantly in the last 10 years.' He strongly believes that the new pad will change the face of gaming.

■ Tekmatex Marubeni (formerly just simple old Marubeni) is set to distribute Jaleco's Tokyo Highway Battle – a conversion of the Japanese hit race coin-op. The company that's currently pinning its Christmas hopes on NASCAR Racing '96 (reviewed by Andy this issue) also has Capcom's Super Pang Collection scheduled for a February

release and Breath of Fire 3, also from Capcom, for April.

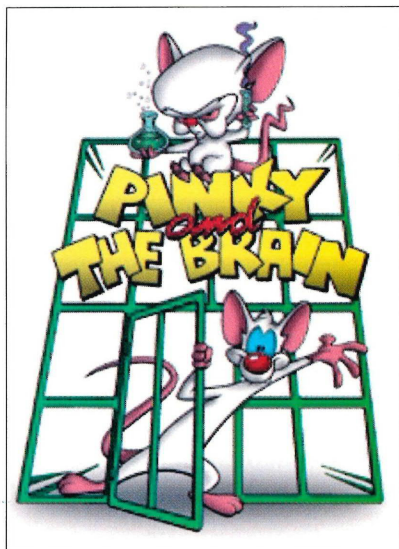
■ Team 17's mascot, the old bloke who adorned last month's news page, has been receiving floods of fan mail. Ranging from sexy teenage girls to dodderly old grannies, the poor gadgie's been inundated with wigs, hearing aids and corsets. And all he wants to do is play Project X.

Cartoon Capers

Anything with the name Spielberg associated with it is going to be big and fortunately for new cartoon duo Pinky and his mate The Brain, the bearded one has his finger well and truly in their pie so to speak. And who better to bring them to life on your PlayStation than gaming giant Konami.

No screenshots are available just yet but details of the gameplay have just been released. The game is a 3-D interactive cartoon (three words that usually strike fear into the hearts of games reviewers the world over) in which you control **Pinky and The Brain** through a variety of action adventures. As Brain you even get to travel through time in order to take over the world!

Konami are promising a 3-D world (isn't everyone these days?), multiple styles of gameplay, the chance to use either Pinky or Brain (each of which has different abilities) and multiple paths through the game to completion. This is still some way off at the moment, spring '97 being the expected release date, giving you plenty of time to start getting excited.



In our day, it was all acme this and acme that. A cartoon was a cartoon, not a blinkin' interactive adventure game



Imagine the following - a tall, lumbering man with a deep voice and stubble is dressed as a nurse and he's carrying a canister of laughing gas



Ooh Matron etc.

No you didn't read it wrong. If you thought running a Theme Park was a bizarre idea for a computer game, how about running a hospital? You'll have complete control over all aspects of managing a successful unit and will have to worry about things such as keeping waiting lists down, and other such strange tasks. As you'd expect if you've played Theme Park, **Theme Hospital** is a semi serious business sim with tongue stuck firmly in cheek. You need to take the job seriously if you don't want patients dying left, right and centre. It'd be difficult to get too depressed while playing a game where the crises you face include a psychiatric ward full of Elvis impersonators or an out patients department full of people suffering from a nasty affliction known as Hairy-itis. If you've ever fancied becoming a hospital administrator, this is the game for you. Expect to see it early next year (but don't hold your breath). Let's hope someone gives the Tories a copy. They might learn a thing or two.

More news the 'Wars

As mentioned in last month's news, Bullfrog's **Syndicate Wars** is finally on its way. To be published by Electronic Arts and released in January, this game isn't a straightforward battle between good and evil. In a welcome departure from the vast majority of arcade/strategy blasters, players can pin the colours of either the EuroCorp Syndicate or the Church of the New Epoch to their mast. Watch out for the stunning 'dynamic lighting' system which allows for shooting and subterfuge in the shadows.

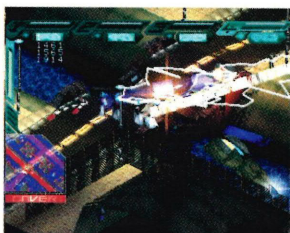
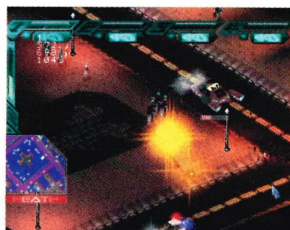
There are numerous individual characters in the game, ranging from special agents to world-beating scientists and mercenary

Syndicate operatives blessed with special abilities. Planning your assaults, we're reliably informed by staff at Bullfrog, is the best way, but there's still abattoir-loads of mindless violence though.

The combat doesn't just take place on Earth. Do well enough for either faction and you may find yourself heading off to an orbital space station.

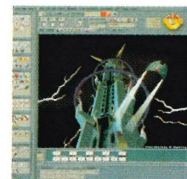
When it finally hits the shelves, **Syndicate Wars** will have a two player link-up - it'll be interesting to see how this works in practice on a 3-D isometric play area. Find out if it's all been worth the wait in next month's **PlayStation Pro**.

There are over a dozen types of vehicle in **Syndicate Wars**, including ships. You can steal and control taxis, punk bikes, armoured trucks, personnel carriers, cars and even twin-rocket firing siege tanks



The Next Generation Game

GameGen II for Windows NT will give PC-based games developers a level of creativity once exclusive to users of high-end Unix workstations. By introducing GameGen II to the Windows NT platform, MultiGen has shattered the cost of realtime 3D games development. GameGen II allows developers to create realtime games, enabling players limitless interaction with 3D worlds. GameGen II for Windows NT is the first authoring application to enable development of complex interactive 3D worlds on affordable PC workstations. GameGen II is optimised to develop content for next generation consoles such as the PlayStation. An essential component of the 3D games development process, GameGen II's point and click menus of authoring and editing tools accelerate the production cycle of interactive 3D game titles. GameGen II has already been a success on Silicon Graphics workstations with the creation of titles such as **Twisted Metal**, **Warhawk** and **Cyberia**. Dennis Yeo, President of MultiGen, remarked, 'By the end of 1997 there will be an estimated 20 million games consoles and PCs with the power to run realtime 3D games. The present opportunity is not unlike the introduction of 'talkies' to the Hollywood film industry... we are about to see a revolution in both game content and development.'





Department of Health

To: Warwickshire County Council

Petition against Dominic Wheadon

We, the undersigned, wish to submit an official complaint against Mr Dominic Wheadon of 13 Turret Grove, Coventry.

Despite repeated requests from residents Mr Wheadon refuses to remove the 25ft hardboard Venus Fly Trap, pig and palm tree from his garden. The said monstrosities attract hordes of undesirable tourists to the street and causes frequent disruption in an otherwise quiet, respectable area.

Mr Wheadon also refuses to remove the skunks, turtles and bandicoots which continually escape from his garden and foul the footpaths and grass verges.

Lastly we would demand that Mr Wheadon be restrained from playacting scenes from "Crash Bandicoot", the PlayStation video game in his garden, as he creates noise and disturbance all night long, lowering the tone of the neighbourhood.

Name	Address
Gillian Sparkling-Gam	17 Turret Grove
David Sparkling-Gam	"
Mr Joseph Brennan	"
Professor C. Hobbsbaum	3 St. John's Way
Mrs. J. Hobbsbaum	14 Carnegie House, Inglenwood Rd.
Mrs. W. Collins	14 Caroline Ave. Inglenwood Rd.
McG.C. Collins	26 Chester Close
Eraverton Cobb	26 Chester Close
George Hedy Hayner	4 Plympton Ave
JUDITH A. HIGGINS	40 Inglenwood Road
	32 Turret Grove

Soviet Strike

The world's favourite isometric 3D helicopter shoot'em-up with Strike in the title is now arriving on the 32-bit express. Is it worth the wait?

A stalwart of the games scene since at least 1837, the Strike series places you at the helm of a super-hard Apache assault chopper and demands you use it to slap a bit of sense into uppity regimes around the world.

It all began with the tasty yet tactless Desert Strike, released before the dust had even settled over Kuwait. Infiltrating the sand-blown strongholds of the evil dictator Kilbaba (bearing absolutely no resemblance to Saddam, obviously), you were required to win the Gulf War single handed. Which was quite easy.

Dual chopper action awaits on later levels, but are you man enough to take it?

Then came Jungle Strike, where you had to do exactly the same thing – in a jungle. This was swiftly followed by Urban Strike, which swapped trees for streets and involved pelting around major cities kicking terrorist butt and saving the president.

For the series' Playstation debut, Electronic Arts has plumped once again for a politically sensitive locale. This time you hover and blast your way through the collapsing Soviet Union on the trail of a rogue hardline communist militia run by the mysterious Shadowman.

With backup from the Strike-Net team (see yonder for details) you begin in the Crimea, where you fight



off rebel commies long enough to use top secret spy technology to eavesdrop on the Shadowman's plans. Then it's off to the Black Sea to halt the theft of decommissioned battleships, complete with nuclear arsenal.

That done, hold off an attack on a chemical weapons plant just down the road from the original Desert Strike battlefield. Pause for a cheese sandwich and a mug of tea, catch the lunchtime edition of Home and Away, and then save a reactor core deep in Transylvania before taking to the streets of Moscow to help allied forces quell the Shadowman's armed coup, saving celebrity boozier

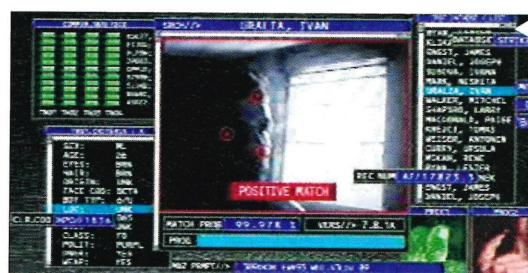
Boris Yeltsin in the process. Not much to ask, is it?

As before, the instant appeal of the game is just grabbing the joystick and haring about the landscape blowing seven shades out of anything that looks remotely hostile. This form of play can amuse and entertain for about half an hour before you realise you're not actually getting anywhere. And there's a reason for this. Tactics. You see, each level is divided into separate missions. Complete them in order and you get vital info to assist in the next missions. Softly softly, catchee monkey, impetuous one.

The missions range from simple seek and



Why not take the scenic route on your way to mass destruction?

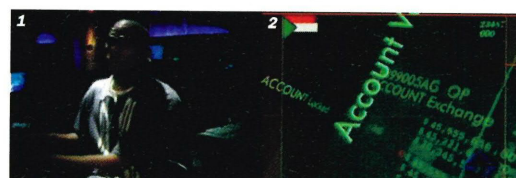


Strike Net keep you updated with full motion video messages regarding mission objectives



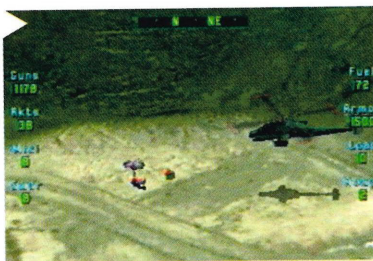
Knock out radar posts early on, and life will get a lot easier

Your mission, should



1. Hack picks up some dodgy deals... 2. ...he Playboy homepage 5. Your co-pilot is captured...

Leathery faced
"Wish You Were
Here" presenter
Gloria Hunniford
prepares to
take a
sidewinder in
the parasol.
That'll teach her
to be so smug



Some of the
enemies are
genuinely
sub-standard.
Oh yes

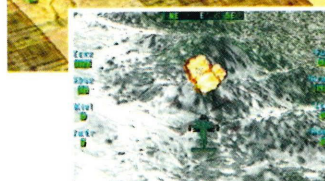


Your crap co-pilot gets captured
again, making him the helicopter
version of a Doctor Who assistant

destroy orders, where you must find a specific
enemy installation and render it dead with big
explosions, to more tricky tasks such as liberating
prisoners of war from camps. This requires you to
choose targets carefully to prevent slaughtering
innocent civilians. Not that the American's have ever
worried about that in the past, mind you. The
game's map can show you the location of each
target, as well as enemy movements and friendly
resources. Mission info can also be called up here,
to make sure you know exactly what's expected.

To help in this mammoth task your chopper is
laden with a variety of death dealing weaponry. The
most basic, but frequently most useful, is the chain
gun. It's ideal for wiping out infantry and destroying
buildings, but falls short against heavily armoured
targets.

Next up you have rockets, which pack a minor
wallop, but are capable of taking out a tank.
Missiles are next, doing the equivalent damage of
three rockets. This makes them ideal for eliminating
big, nasty targets when you don't have time to hang
around. And at the top of the tree o' destruction lurk
the Hellfires, the perfect weapon for sorting out ►

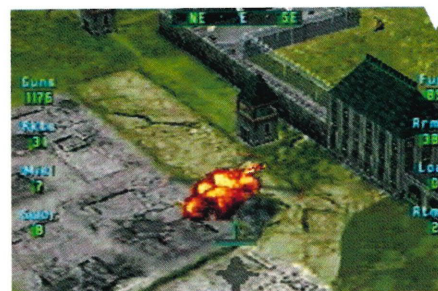


Shellshocked pilots often
mistake mountains for
enemy tanks



Stuck in the middle of Moscow, surrounded
by armed rebels and low on armour. Mother
warned me about days like this...

A new viewpoint allows
you to view the action
from any angle, making
the game truly 3D



Infiltrate this
prison compound
and free the allied
prisoners from a
life of Russian
porridge

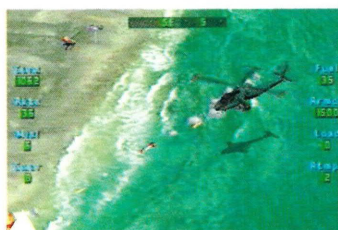


At the scene of the original Desert
Strike, can you prevent a chemical
weapon falling into enemy hands?

you choose to accept it...



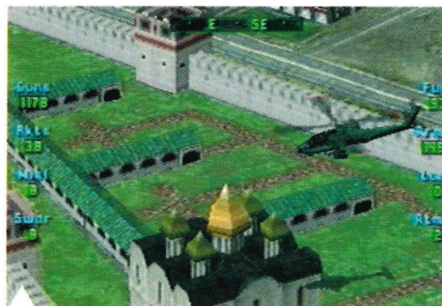
demonstrates, using virtual reality for no reason... 3. ...while the blue faced boss looks on... 4. His job done, Hack returns to the
6. ...but Strike's media babe has sussed out who's responsible... 7. ...so, as Ron Pickering would've said, "Away you go!"



A lethal Hellfire missile launches itself to...absolutely nowhere actually. What a great shot



The map can be used to keep tabs on anything and everything in the game. It also pauses the action, if it gets too much



The gleaming spires of Mother Russia. Beautiful. Of course, if they happen to get blown to pieces, that's hardly your fault, is it?

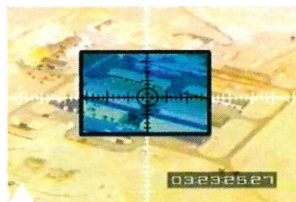
Soviet Strike

► loads of enemies at once. Each weapon comes with limited ammo, and you'll need to stock up often to survive the more frantic battles. The trouble is, ammo is not in plentiful supply. The map can show you where to find more, but if you use up all that's on the map that's yer lot.

The same goes for fuel, an asset that's easy to forget. If you suddenly find yourself low on fuel, you'd better pray there's some nearby or it's hello oblivion. The other important variable is armour. While refills can be found, they're scarce and the best way to patch up the Apache is to winch up some civilians and deliver them to a friendly landing zone. Each person rescued increases armour rating, you see.

So, that's what happens, but what's it like? First impressions are good, thanks to some sexy video footage. Soviet Strike boasts possibly the first ever use of Full Motion Video where it actually works in the context of the game.

The opening credits could be taken from a Hollywood film, and they seem to have used



Knock Knock. Who's There? A Smart Missile. Smart Missile who? Oh...bugger. KA-BOOM

actors who can actually act for a change. Throughout, you receive messages from Strike Command, using grainy camcorder footage and digital readouts to enhance the covert military atmosphere. These are brilliantly done and enhance the game no end.

But the screeching voices in my mind tell me there are some minor grumbles that need airing.

First of all, despite some truly stunning background graphics, the game is essentially the same as it was on the Megadrive. If it ain't broke, don't fix it and all that palaver, but any improvements are largely cosmetic. A dash of video footage and a sprig of stereo sound are the main dishes on offer. Suffice to say, if you're familiar with the 16-bit version,

you may start to feel *déjà vu*.

Secondly, because of the aforementioned stunning background graphics, the game does stutter slightly as you fly over tricky terrain. The helicopter automatically rises and falls, so a long flight over the Crimean mountains, for instance, lurches alarmingly and is hardly in keeping with the idea of a super-efficient assault 'copter. It also



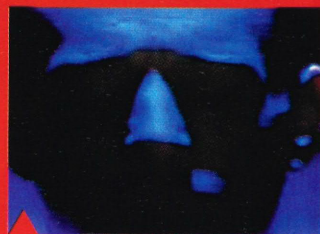
As you can see, this bijou residence boasts a Middle Eastern style roof, and a heavily armed copter, conveniently hovering outside



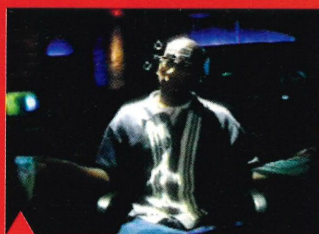
Expertly directed FMV keeps the story moving along. They'll crop up before, after and during each level. Nice

Wanna be in my gang?

At least you're not alone in the fight against missile-toting communist extremists. Waiting in the wings is the Strike team, on hand with info and harsh words to get you on your way. Let's meet them:



General Earle, Strike Commander
A gruff US military type, familiar from any testosterone fuelled flick like *Top Gun* or *Crimson Tide*. He barks orders at you, and is prone to making stony faced proclamations like "War...war isn't what it used to be". If he had a pop at you in the pub, you'd be legging it through the bog window faster than you can say "That Exocet is very Freudian, are you compensating for something?"



"Hack", Communications Officer
The eyes and ears of Strike Command, and a convicted hacker. His job is to sit in a basement, surrounded by hi-tech surveillance equipment, monitoring cyberspace for sensitive data. He'll crop up during missions to update you on new developments and enemy movements. Like all net-geeks, during quiet moments, he down-loads nude pictures of Drew Barrymore and makes himself go blind.



Andrea Grey, Field Operative
The anti-Kate Adie, Andrea is Strike's misinformation outlet. When the aftermath of a Strike mission attracts the attention of the world media, she steps in to cover up the true nature of what really happened thanks to her important role as anchorwoman for GBS News. They tend to call it "plausible deniability". We prefer to call it "bloody lying". But what would we know about journalism?



Nick Arnold, Apache Co-Pilot
Short tempered and vastly irritating, Nick is a seat-of-the-pants kinda guy who likes nothing better than to get right into the thick of the action. Thus, at handy points in the game, you can drop him off to infiltrate enemy areas and generally cause mayhem. At the start of the game he's held prisoner in an enemy compound about to face the firing squad. So he's obviously not as hard as he reckons

becomes violently hard after level one, so wusses might require hot, sweet tea and a sit down after a prolonged session.

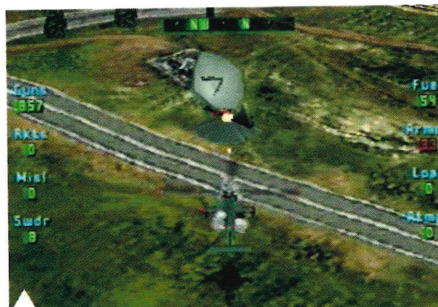
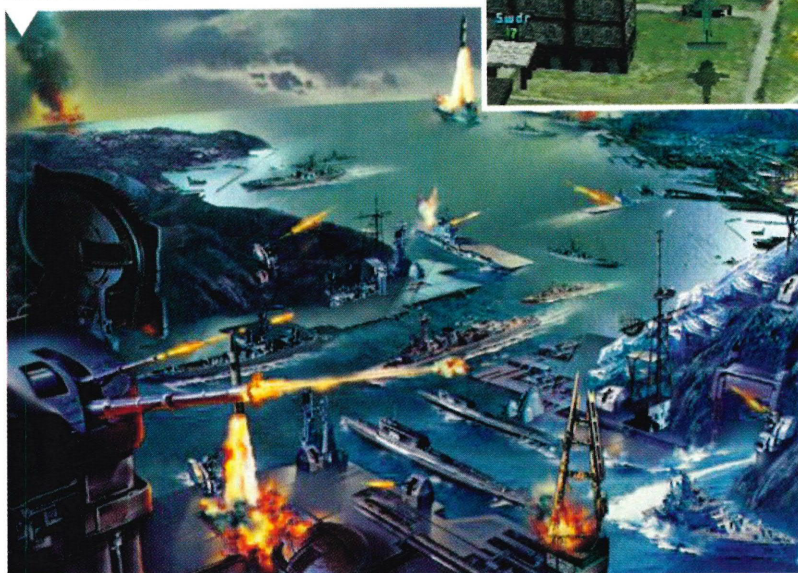
All in all though, Soviet Strike has retained all the excitement of its predecessors. The missions start off fairly simple but soon require lightning reflexes and sharp thinking. They are varied enough, as are the locations, so while the fly/shoot framework is constant, you shouldn't get bored.

The photo-realistic graphics add extra oomph to the action so the feeling of satisfaction as you pulverise another missile launcher takes some beating, due to the meaty explosions. In fact, if you squint a bit, you could almost be in Airwolf.

It's a hefty game, and not one you'll complete easily, but cynics might say that it's just Desert Strike with a fresh lick of paint. And they'd be right, in a funny sort of way. I certainly enjoyed it, just as I enjoyed its prequels, but can't see myself coming back to it very often.

An artists impression of total destruction, Soviet Strike style. Hectic? You should see the game

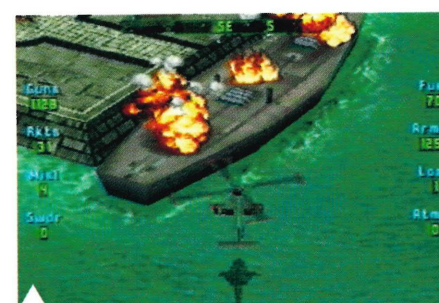
Even the slums of Moscow take a pounding this time around



A rogue Apache pilot takes a violent dislike to Sky TV subscribers. Can you reach him before Rupert Murdoch's hit squad?



Relive The Shawshank Redemption and Apocalypse Now, all in the space of one game



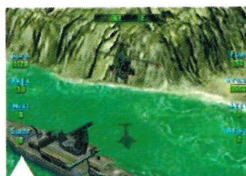
Take out the cargo ships before Shadowman can use them to beef up his rebel forces



Messages from Strike Command appear at bottom right. Press start to see the full video transmissions



Friendly landing zones offer ammo, fuel and the chance to boost armour



That's your aircraft carrier. Don't blow it up. Not that I did. Oh no

GENRE COMPARISON

Game Black Dawn
Software House Virgin

The viewpoint may be different, but the essence remains the same. Choppers and shooters are the order of the day, and both games offer a new spin on things. Soviet Strike makes better use of FMV, but Black Dawn's 3D engine shows up Strike's ancient 16-bit origins.



Unwanted industrial estates demolished. Just call 01753 549442 and ask for Strike Command

PRO SCORE

GAME Soviet Strike
CONTACT 01753 549442

GENRE Shoot'em-up
RELEASE DATE Out Now

SOFTWARE HOUSE Electronic Arts
PRICE £44.99

GRAPHICS 9
SOUND 9
GAMEPLAY 8
LASTABILITY 8

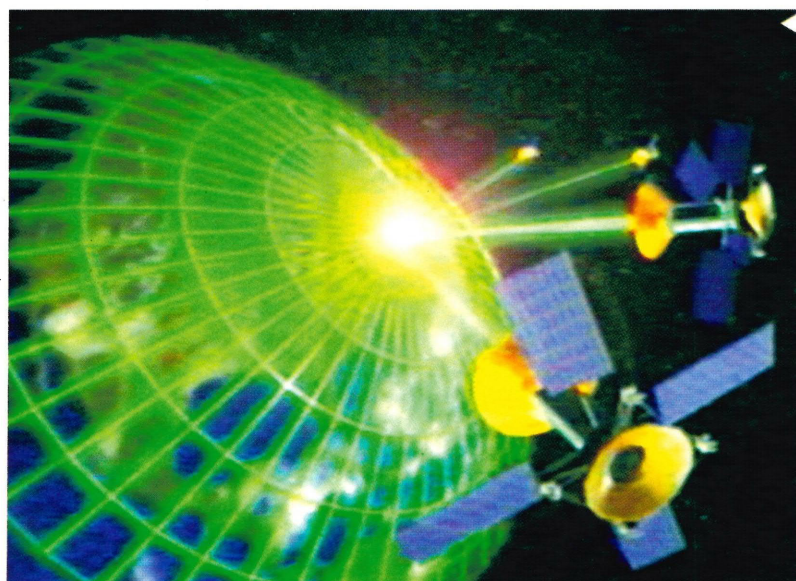
Despite still being essentially the same game from 1992, Soviet Strike has cast off the rough hessian undergarments of 16-bit and slipped into a sleek 32-bit basque with finesse. The filmed inserts boost the atmosphere through the roof, and actually serve a purpose while the freedom of a large map means you can work out your own attack strategies rather than following preset routes. The only real downer is the sudden plunge in difficulty. For this reason, impatient players may not stick at it for very long. Give it a go.

8
OVERALL
OUTTA 10

STEVE Definitely on a par with last month's Black Dawn, but not really much of an improvement
JAY Imagine the old Desert Strike series getting a next generation vanity boost, and you're there
ANDY The old Desert and Jungle Strikes updated to look, sound and play better. Definitely worth a look
ALEX An average debut that hardly makes the most of the hardware

Steel Harbinger

Mindscape takes on the shoot'em-up with varying degrees of success. The world is under alien attack and there's only one person to protect it. And unsurprisingly that's you



The shield is up. No more of those darned meteors should get through for a while

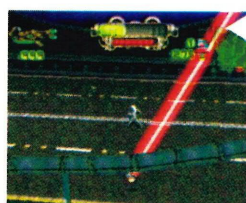
This view is by far the most helpful allowing you to see great distances



The harbinger must blast endless numbers of aliens before the world falls into their hands



The ground is littered with corpses in varying states



The lasers follow your path until they fizzle out



The warm glow around the harbinger is the shield wearing off. The aliens can now inflict damage to your body once again

The shoot'em-up genre has been through a lot of ups and downs as developers try to find a new angle to attract buyers. Mindscape is no different and has incorporated a little more than just mindless blasting at anything that moves. Only a little mind you. Too much thought won't be required.

Beginning *Steel Harbinger* you are treated to a rather lengthy intro which gives the lowdown of what's brought about the current state of affairs.

After a terrible World War, the Earth is peppered with thousands of meteors. These contain alien beings which convert flesh into robotic killing machines, and plants become carnivores. All this is slightly contradictory but what it all boils down to is the fact that an alien invasion is imminent.

Many scientists try to thwart the alien threat but during the experiments one woman becomes infected with the alien virus. It's now down to this scientist's daughter to put an end to the alien threat. Under her father's guidance she's deployed to bring destruction to the entire alien invasion force and free the Earth once again.

Taking on the same view point as the classic

Loaded it also plays in much the same way. The areas in which you do battle are both in and outdoor so there's little linear gameplay as you're free to wander wherever you please. This is something which games like *Loaded* lack to a certain degree.

Comparing this solely to *Loaded* however, is not fair to either release as there are plenty of differences all round and with *Reloaded* on the way who's to judge them against each other?

Protecting only the United States, far and away the greatest country in the world, (oh yes) from these aliens and let's face it, it really does need saving, your only safe haven is the icy Antarctic base erected by the surviving scientists. It is to this location you must teleport for energy restoration and more information on alien movements.

The invasion seems to be centred around the major cities of the USA to begin with (probably because it was developed there) and travelling in the teleporter will cost more than your average airfare – after all, it is all set in the year 2069. To

obtain credits you must collect the numerous red icons and stash them until you have enough to travel to the next destination.

Other items to collect are energy bonuses, pass cards to access computer terminals and weapon bonuses as well as ammo (of which you will need plenty).

Blasting enemies will spread their torsos over a small area and collecting the remnants regains a little health.

As well as blasting all aliens away you must solve a few puzzles and tasks set at the start of a level otherwise you can't teleport anywhere other than your Arctic base. Don't fear however, as these aren't too taxing – they're more time consuming than anything else.

The quality craftsmanship we've been treated to over many releases is somewhat lacking here. The PlayStation's capabilities are far from stretched although it's by no means as bad as most of the Japanese-only releases.

Controlling the harbinger is pretty straightforward with each of the buttons having some effect on

War and more war. This is the world of the harbinger



1. Victim of war 2. The battle rages on... 3. ...And on... 4. ...And on... 5. 28 years later the aliens are ready for world domination



6. Humans are soon attacked 7. Transforming them into warriors 8. Humans fight back 9. Research begins 10. Enter harbinger



11. Attacked by alien pod 12. Freed 13. It's too late 14. The harbinger is here 15. The alien numbers grow at a alarming pace



16. The lab is attacked 17. Some scientists die... 18. ...Others escape 19. Harbinger released 20. Only she can end the horror

game progress whether it be firing or simply changing weapons.

The levels may be quite lengthy and involved but it all becomes very samey, very quickly and to counter this problem there are some video discs which you can access. These contain some witty mini TV ads like the ones seen in the Robocop film. Unfortunately though, they are more corny and annoying than interesting snippets of what could be.

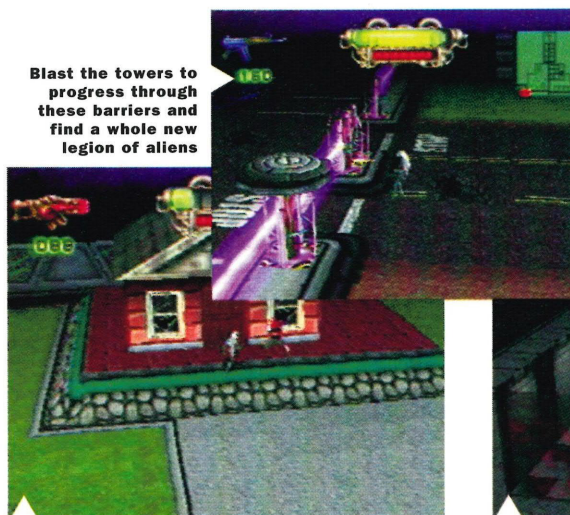
As the missions begin there are a few access points which look like telephone booths. From these points you can gradually learn more about enemy movements, and the mission objectives will become clearer.

The missions will generally have a few objectives apart from saving the stranded humans who frankly should have found somewhere to hide.

Unfortunately these don't need to be accessed and if you've already completed some of the stage and do access one point, the information will already be old hat and as a result, pointless.

There are some nice touches which although not unique to Steel Harbinger are done with some

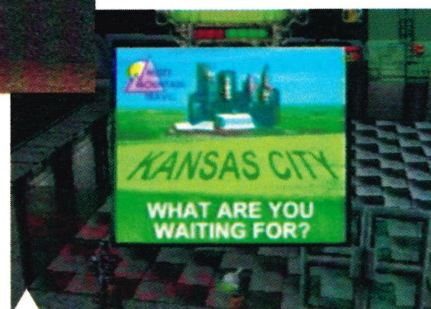
Blast the towers to progress through these barriers and find a whole new legion of aliens



All buildings can be explored. Some contain bonuses, others will house alien aggressors. Be prepared



The rotating loading screen in all its glory



One of the oh so funny advert disks which you will stumble across as you attempt to save the human race

Steel Harbinger

► style. The cut scenes are quite neat and the lengthy intro movie is also well executed. The graphics on the whole are hardly groundbreaking and have been seen in numerous releases thus far on the PlayStation.

As you blast your way through the endless numbers of aliens they will be reinforced by more meteorites which fall randomly all over the level, bury themselves and begin their work.

You're not sent out to do the work single handedly – some remaining army members are allegedly dotted around to assist the cause. I say *allegedly* because their intelligence has obviously been overlooked as they blast away at thin air and also you. Not once have I seen an alien shot at by an army member although one actually came close once.

One of your most important objectives is to save as many humans as possible who have avoided the alien virus before they too become victims. To do this you should walk into them at which point they will disappear in a flash of light and apparently be saved.

There doesn't seem to be a minimum number before a level can be completed and the main objectives seem to be to cripple the alien invasion

before it becomes far too intense.

To keep your energy high you can collect icons which will replenish it but the most common way you can keep going is to pick up the remains of the enemies you have blasted into bits. Obviously this takes more time to rebuild lost energy but the opportunity occurs much more frequently.

Far and away a sure-fire way to keep your energy topped up is to teleport back to the Antarctic base where you can be repaired to the hilt every time. There's only one teleporter per level however, so this isn't always going to be your best option.

If this isn't enough, there are the obligatory views which can be changed to your preference at any stage using the shoulder buttons. You can zoom in to see the harbinger in all her scantily clad glory or zoom out so you are tiny. Unfortunately the close-in view is useless as you can't see anything around you and from behind a wall you can't even see yourself. What's the point of that?

If you persevere through a few levels you are offered the opportunity of hopping aboard tanks or hover transports in your quest to blast the aliens from existence. So there's plenty to think about and do within Steel Harbinger only it seems to have had more time spent on cramming as much as possible within the boundaries without too much thought on the finer points of the game as a whole.



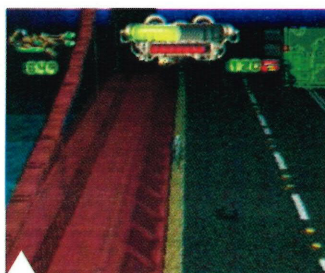
The frozen Antarctic base seems to have been placed where Canada once stood



Ho ho! What a hilarious ad. Instead of real hair you slap this on your bald head and before you know it your barnet consists of worms



Inside the arctic base you can replenish all energy before returning to the front for more battles



A brisk stroll across the Golden Gate bridge. At least this hasn't been occupied by the enemy forces yet



Aliens really do like their gooey alien production lines don't they. And these are no exception



More guided lasers track your path in the hope of ruining your day. Run like the wind



Now this is funny. Another one of those disks shows two people being vaporised by lasers. A classic and no mistake



Spinning aliens are weak and pathetic. They hardly take a shot before they're spread over the immediate area

GENRE COMPARISON

Game Loaded
Software House Gremlin

One of the earliest releases for the PlayStation now updated and improved in Reloaded. With a choice of six characters and some massive levels crammed with enemies it still rates highly in the shoot'em-up stakes in that it looks and plays so well.

PRO SCORE

GAME Steel Harbinger
CONTACT 01444246333

GENRE Shoot'em-up
RELEASE DATE Out now

SOFTWARE HOUSE Mindscape
PRICE £44.99

GRAPHICS 7
SOUND 6
GAMEPLAY 6
LASTABILITY 6

With plenty of time and effort spent on filling the disk with as much as possible from the lengthy intro, the different levels around the USA, view points, teleporters, weapons and the huge levels you'd expect this to be one of the finest games the shoot'em-up genre has ever seen. But it isn't. Why? Because it all seems a little too samey at the end of the day. It looks like more time has been spent making the intro as glossy as possible with the game being an afterthought. It's a classic case of could've been better.

6
OVERALL OUTTA 10

STEVE Ooh dear me no. Something's gone spectacularly wrong somewhere with this I reckon

JAY If you fancy a dull, badly thought out, bland and ultimately boring-as-hell 'romp', then buy this, sucker!

DAN Zzzzzz...oh, sorry. Dreary run-and-shooty action with toss graphics and even tossier gameplay

ALEX If only the game lived up to the camp B-movie style intro, it may have been a laugh



DADE COUNTY POLICE DEPARTMENT

YEARLY ASSESSMENT / FITNESS FOR DUTY

OFFICER NAME FIRST John LAST O'Rourke
RANK Detective
WEIGHT 195 Kilos
DATE OF LAST ASSESSMENT 10/3/95 HEIGHT 6'1" TERM OF DUTY 12 years
PHYSICAL EXAMINATION 36 TODAY'S DATE 10/6/96

Officer's physical fitness has deteriorated since last year. Failed to complete 7 mile run. Heartbeat over 160bpm. - nightmares about "terrorists dressed as clowns trying to bomb his home" are keeping him awake.

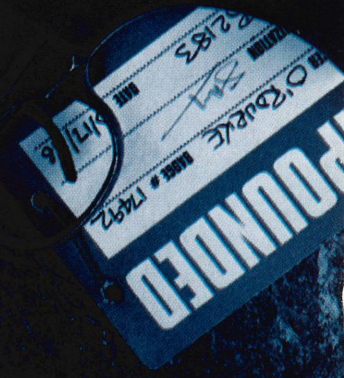
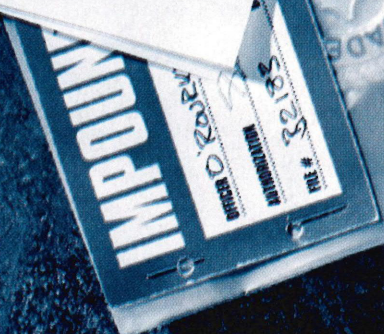
PERFORMANCE ON DUTY

According to colleagues, Officer O'Rourke has become excessively paranoid. He believes madmen are out to "gun him down" on every street corner. This has led in turn to said officer making a t (Luigi Donatelli) in the Metropolitan Circus Clown "Bozo precinct and court action is pending.

RECOMMENDATION

1. Officer should be suspended from duty until further notice.
2. PlayStation video game "Broken Sword", a detective mystery, should be removed from precinct forthwith to avoid affecting other officers.

ASSESSOR'S SIGNATURE Sam M. L.



"Broken Sword" sets an impressive standard for world be sutors Official Playstation 9110



Street Fighter Alpha 2

It's inevitable. As long as there are games machines there will be Street Fighter games to play and people willing to hand over cash to do so. Cashing in maybe, but who's complaining?



ZANGIEF



CHUN LI



ADON



AKUMA



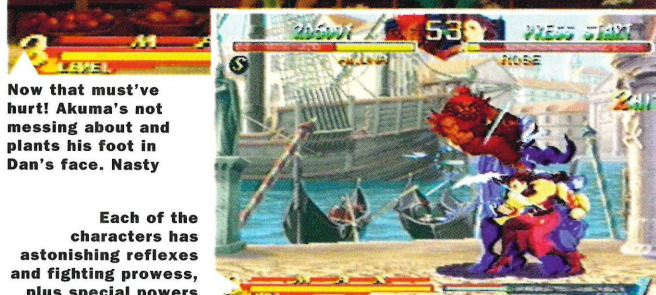
DHALSIM



M. BISON



Now that must've hurt! Akuma's not messing about and plants his foot in Dan's face. Nasty



Each of the characters has astonishing reflexes and fighting prowess, plus special powers



The ultimate goal. Defeat Master Gen and you're treated to a character specific end sequence



With this attack Gen shows why he's the master and Sakura the student



Gen may be getting on a bit but he can still hand out a good kicking when he wants to. As Akuma is finding out



But Akuma's no slouch either. His patented flying kick defeats the master, but rest assured he'll come back stronger



Bit of a mismatch in size here, but Zangief's so slow that only an excellent tactician will win against him very often

I suppose we were all expecting it. Street Fighter is so popular it's going to be wrung out until it's well and truly bone dry and only then will the characters move into the next dimension.

The plans are already afoot for a 3-D Tekken style game, currently going under the name of Street Fighter Gaiden, but it's a good few months away yet. So long in fact it would seem there's time to release at least another two games in the format we're all used to, namely this one and a crossover between Ryu and the boys and popular Marvel characters The X Men.

This game could well topple die hard Street Fighter fans over the edge before that. Ever since the Super Nintendo version first came out some four years ago there have been a hell of a lot of different versions, all based around the same theme.

It started with the turbo games, moved on to the game of the film and then the first Street Fighter Alpha version. This second Alpha game means the aficionado who's loyally gone out and bought each and every release has now spent a couple of hundred pounds on their obsession and may be starting to think enough's enough.

Fortunately I'm not in that position. I haven't played any version of this since the first SNES one and that places me handily in the situation of not having yet reached Street Fighter saturation point. It means I can give an objective view of the game



The backdrops are all animated again, but not all that impressive really



Although no longer top dog as he once was, M. Bison still packs quite a punch



Looks like Zangief's enjoying himself. I doubt whether Dan's too happy about the situation though

itself and allow you to make up your own minds as to whether you can take another helping or not.

From my point of view I can't really see where the series can go from here in terms of improving the actual game. If this had been titled Ultimate Street Fighter, or something equally as tacky, you wouldn't have been able to disagree. Virtually every option imaginable is in there somewhere, right down to recording yourself going through your best moves against a passive opponent so as to hone your technique to perfection.

Whether the majority will ever make use of this feature is doubtful but the fact that it's there shows how complete a job has been done on this. You can compete as all the characters right from the off (as far as I'm aware every fighter from every SF game so far is included), so there's no fiddling about with fancy sequences to be rewarded with the chance of fighting as someone different (although there are a couple of well hidden characters that only a true master of the game will be able to discover).

There's a mass of moves to be learned, difficulty levels to master and challenges to meet, meaning this game will occupy you for just about as long as you want it to. And that's only one player mode!

The format of the single player game is pretty much as you were. Pick a fighter and travel around the globe taking on all comers, who of course become progressively harder. It's best-of-three

round action and the winner moves on to face the next combatant, but not before pausing to have a bit of a gloat and rub in your victory.

The final challenge lies when you face Master Gen, undoubtedly the best fighter around but also well versed in the ways of magic, so expect a few nasty fireballs in the face when you take him on. Defeat him and you're treated to a somewhat disappointing end sequence which varies depending on which fighter you've been using. I suppose this is intended to give you an incentive to play through with other fighters and it may well do, but initially you'll probably feel let down that your efforts have been rewarded with such an unspectacular prize.

But playing Street Fighter brings its own rewards, especially in two player mode. New beat'em-ups often bring the office to a standstill when they arrive and this one, although massively overshadowed by Capcom's 3-D epic Star Gladiator, still had it's fair share of people vying to play the winner. Undoubtedly a testament to the game's staying power in a very competitive market.

What makes it so enjoyable is that the game somehow offers even the most inexperienced player the chance of the odd victory against a veteran, even with the handicapping system set the same for both players. I'm only speculating here but I reckon this happens because players develop their own individual styles after a while and learn



Akuma is one of the best all round fighters and a good early choice



My old favourite from the original, Ryu, hasn't lost that old magic



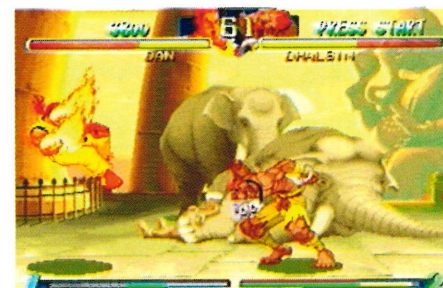
The solo game sees you battling your way around the globe taking on all comers. Here Akuma is due to fight Charlie in the 'good old' US of A



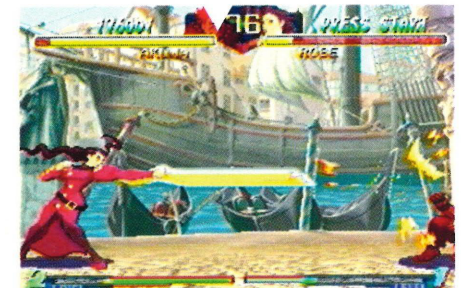
There's nothing like a gracious winner really is there. And Dan is nothing like one. Good line though, you've got to give him that



Fireball fans have no need to worry, you certainly haven't been neglected this time around



Don't ask me what Rose is using here, I haven't a clue what it is!



BIRDIE



CHARLIE



SODOM



SAGAT



DAN



ROSE

Street Fighter Alpha 2

► how to deal with a certain opponents methods of attack and combinations. When a new player picks up the joystick they bring an element of unpredictability to the proceedings and it can take even experienced players a while to adjust. This has to be another point in SFA's favour. There's no set way to victory and therefore no guaranteed victor.

Even if you're absolutely rubbish, the game's comprehensive options allow you to tailor play to give you at least a fighting chance. I mentioned the handicapping system earlier. Basically this entails a series of options that let you configure how much damage your blows inflict, the speed your fighter can move and react, whether you have to worry about blocking yourself or let the PlayStation do it and even change how much health you have to begin with. Very handy indeed for the beginner.

A further improvement (and remember, some of these may have been in earlier versions of the series, just not the original) are the combos for which you get extra points, and even praise from the watching Master if it's a particularly good one. Not only are they massively destructive but the feeling of satisfaction is immense when you pull one off, particularly if you manage to use it to finish a round.

The more you play the more the hidden complexities of the game start to reveal themselves, but they do so in a sneaky way so you're never playing just to find out what they are

(something which annoyed me greatly with Tekken).

No amount of praise however can alter the fundamental fact that Street Fighter has been left trailing well behind as a game concept by the likes of Tekken 2, Star Gladiator and indeed any number of other 3-D based beat'em-ups that have already appeared on the PlayStation.

The new generation of gameplayers is unlikely to be willing to give SFA2 the chance it deserves but that's not to say there isn't still a massive market that will snap this up eagerly. Arcade fans wanting to take their work home with them, ex SNES owners looking for the definitive version of their favourite game on their new machine and even just about anyone who's looking for a game that will provide long term enjoyment in both single and two player mode should find themselves well satisfied with it.

On a personal level, I was never an addict like some, more a casual player than anything and this had me harking back a few years and remembering just what a good game it actually is. I think I should say that I'm not exactly a big fan of the new style beat'em-ups though. I've had one go on Star Gladiator and have probably only played Tekken 2 for about an hour at most. So when I say that, out of the current crop of fighting games, I'd rather play this than any other you can either nod your head solemnly in agreement or take it with a pinch of salt depending on your own personal preferences.



it's kicked off between Guy and Adon like I said it would! Fight! Fight!



Would you square up to Dhalsim? I wouldn't much fancy it



Ryu must've mixed his white and coloured loads in the launderette



ROLENTO



RYU



SAKURA



KEN



GUY



MASTER GEN



You're awarded a healthy points bonus for getting the first strike in

GENRE COMPARISON

Game Darkstalkers
Software House Virgin

It would be unfair to draw parallels between this and something like Tekken so I've chosen this now previously best 2-D beat'em-up - previously because SFA2 just about has the edge over its stablemate. Darkstalkers is more moody though if you like your action a touch more on the sinister side and in all honesty there's not a great deal to choose between them.



Guy doesn't look too impressed by Adon's joke. I could be wrong but there could be a fight brewing here

Here's that cast in full, barring a couple of hidden characters that appear only when you're good enough



PRO SCORE

GAME Street Fighter Alpha 2
CONTACT 0171-368 2222

GENRE Beat'em-up
RELEASE DATE Out Now

SOFTWARE HOUSE Virgin
PRICE £44.99

GRAPHICS 8

SOUND 7

GAMEPLAY 8

LASTABILITY 8

As solid a fighting game you'd struggle to find no matter how hard you looked, but the lack of spectacular imagery and a fancy 3-D engine will undoubtedly put off many of today's 'looks motivated' gamers. Having said that, the legendary name alone will create a mass market for this and the fact it's the best home version of Street Fighter ever will justify the fact. It has to be said though, Capcom are in serious danger of overkill now and in PSPro's opinion would do well to leave it alone in this form from now on.

8

OVERALL
OUTTA 10

DAN Possibly the most original game I've ever seen. Why aren't there more like this?

JAY A cool enough fighting title, but I wish Capcom would give all this Street Fighter jive the elbow

ANDY Quite frankly I'm sick of playing Street Fighter games so this doesn't come highly recommended

ALEX The Streetfighter 2 series bows out in style (hopefully) - it hasn't come that far since the SNES

The Roof Jumping Club of New York

Dear Mr. Spirat,

Thank you for your application to join the club. We are delighted to accept you as a member and enclose a membership card and details of your first jump.

Once you've experienced the rush of leaping across a 30ft wide gap between two buildings 200ft above the ground, we're sure you'll want to do it all over again.

Unfortunately we are still required by state law to remind you that roof jumping is illegal and so all club activities must be carried out in complete secrecy. Dates of jumps may change depending on police presence in the area.

Yours

Alvin "Birdie" Bauer

Club President

Please fill in and return to the club

For Club information only

How did you first become interested in roof jumping?

Tick

A. I was inspired by the mechanical Robbit in Jumping Flash 2, the PlayStation video game.

B. Other

Flight without wings. Scientists still baffled.

OK, so you classed yourself among the elite, inhabitants of other planets and didn't, like, give it a second thought...UNTIL NOW. Listen, they keep on telling you those jerks that are EARTHBOY that it "can't" just can't be done. Like what do they constantly say? As new members it was us: "I never knew it was for anyone with nerves of steel. You will like a CONCRETE...here come schedule and meet quarter's jumps on 8.11.96. Early call 1558 6th Street 2A.12.96. Xms Coffee House Manhattan

Whooops! Lucky 1 avoided that banana skin! Yours truly, "THE BIRD" Bauer checks out the chasm on 15th Street, for a hop, skip and giant jump.

Hi Mom!!! Latest wild and crazy techingiders, Harry "Call me pascilian" Zitter! and brother Zak scale the Marlin on the Manhattan Central Park for an all-time record. No hiding hands, folks.

Spirits and co-pilot Novis complete an emergency landing on the roof of Queens. YOU skateboard and eatables, down something like that. "A@@?? GUYS KILL ME (later), according to the radio paster.

Are they, like, ANTS down there or are my reconditioned DECEIVING MET (Bob "The Bomber" Johnson shout to drop his awesome load yet again over an unsuspecting public on 5th and 15th.)

Jumping Flash 2 is a remarkable game on all counts PlayStation Plus

Star Gladiator

Episode One: The Final Crusade

2-D or not 2-D? That was the question. Thankfully, fight supremos Capcom opted for the added dimension in this, its very first polygon venture for the PlayStation. And about time too



Robot war! Vector battles his alter ego in Dr Bilstein's anti-gravity venue



Doctor Bilstein appears in the later bouts and can cause some serious damage to those of you dumb enough to fight him

Capcom, eh? Good old Capcom. 2-D beat'em-ups have been its bread and butter for many a year now and apart from the odd break from the norm (the excellent Resident Evil being one such 'break'), things didn't look like they were gonna change much at its idea HQ.

Street Fighter Alpha 2 is awaiting a UK release any day now, Darkstalkers saw the light of day last month, both X Men: Children Of The Atom and Marvel Super Heroes are on their way and it's even got the bizarre sounding Street Fighter VS X Men waiting in the wings too. With all that in mind, what has the king of fighters got up its sleeve now? Well, sit down and I'll tell you.

Star Gladiator is Capcom's first attempt at a 'new look' beat 'em-up. No longer is it stuck within the restrictions of its old 2-D game engine, Capcom has ample portions of ability and talent to drag the age-old fighting formula kicking and screaming into the next generation and now it finally has done. Big time. Why it hasn't bothered to do it before now, God only knows, but now that it has, I can't see it letting go of this 'new found' idea. In fact its not.

Capcom is already converting the popular Street Fighter series into a polygon-based beat 'em-up under the guise of Street Fighter Gaiden. That's not going to be with us for some time yet so you can waste away the hours playing this – Star Gladiator that is.

As with all Capcom's fighting titles that have come before it, Star Gladiator features an array of muscular combatants blessed with mind-bending special moves and a storyline that would have Hollywood directors fighting hand over fist to turn into a potential blockbuster.

Token bad guy? Yep, he's here and comes in the form of one Doctor Bilstein, a Nobel Prize winning scientist with a habit of causing intergalactic trouble wherever he goes. The year is 2348 and us humans

have been pottering about in space for quite some time and have even managed to make friendly contact with aliens – despite some horrendous X Files episodes.

This initial contact with the almond-eyed ones made it easy for humans to emigrate to various planets and basically, everything in the galaxy is fine and dandy. That is, until good old Dr B sticks his egotistical oar in, uncovers the secret to humanity's sixth sense and stumbles across the formula for a previously unknown energy source called Plasma Power while he's at it.

All this new found knowledge goes to his head and before you know it, Dr B is trying to get a band of rebels together in order to take over the Earth. Fortunately for us Earthlings, he fails miserably and winds up doing some serious porridge in a satellite orbiting the planet Zeta.

After several years of imprisonment, the Doctor builds himself some nifty cyborg armour and manages to escape his cell, taking a band of blood-thirsty freaks with him. He then proceeds to buy a one-way ticket to Earth and his evil galaxy-dominating plan hatches once more. Gulp.

This is where you come in. The Earth Federation needs fighters who can utilize Bilstein's Plasma Weapons and give him a good kicking for all his trouble-causing japes. Are you up for it? Do you think you can handle the Doc and his hapless band of not-so merry men? I certainly hope so.

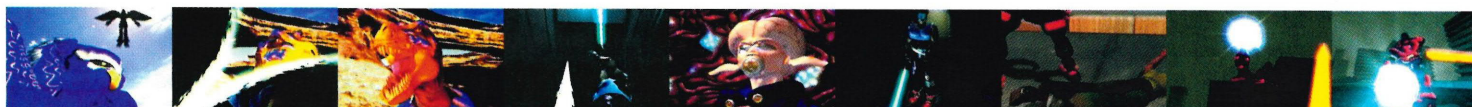
But relax, you're not on your own here. There are several Star Gladiators helping you out on your mission, each one powered with either superb fighting skills, a massive Plasma weapon or both.

Hayato is a big hero from Earth who's pretty handy with a Plasma Sword, Zelkin is an alien eagle bloke complete with spiky fists o' fun, the token female warrior is June, a mistress of the Plasma Circles and Saturn is a cone-headed freak ▶

Stars In Their Eyes

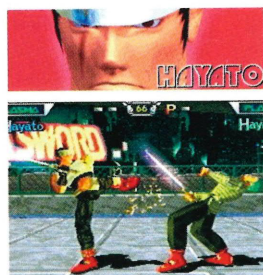


Dr Bilstein is kicking off, picking up innocent blokes from the street and giving them a good shake. Hayato sits in a da up and does a Hot Gossip-type jig for a while until the rest of the bunch rip through the screen to say hello. Bilstein th and wipes out an entire city. Hayato however, is not impressed and shortly after extreme close-ups of both him and the



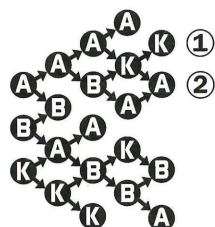
24 Hour Plasma People

Here are those new world warriors in full, plus handy tips on how to work out their crazy combos and Final Plasma doobies...



HAYATO KANZAKI

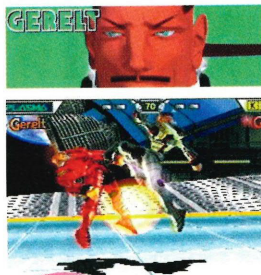
This one obviously models himself on Luke Skywalker, what with his extendable Plasma sword and all that. This blade swipecaster is the games' token lead character and can be pretty handy against most of the Star Gladiator bunch



BIG SWORD

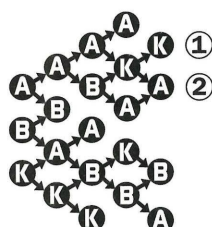
↓ ↓ ↓
BIG SWORD COMBO
→ ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓ ← & A

PLASMA COMBO
A Type - After 2, ↑ & A



FRANCO GERELT

Smooth, sophisticated and a dab hand with a blade by his side, Gerelt is a cyberfencer, thrusting and parrying his way through Dr Bilstein's army of Plasma losers. He may look like a dandy, but he's a real hard case underneath it all



SLASH COMBO

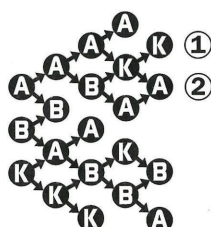
← ← & A, A, A
RUN MOVE
While running, hit K & G

PLASMA COMBO
A Type - After 2, A



DOCTOR BILSTEIN

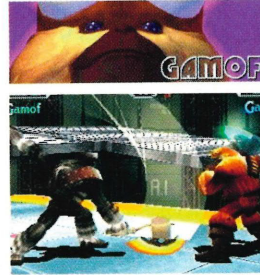
The evil Doctor looks a bit like Skeletor from He Man and is just as nasty. He utilises his Plasma powers in order to win each bout, so watch out for his extended sword strikes and numerous special move treats. They're deadly, you know



VANISHING ACT

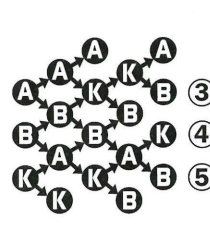
← & K
THROW MOVE
→ ↓ ↓ ↓ ← & A & B

PLASMA COMBO
A Type - After 1, A



GAMOF GOHGRY

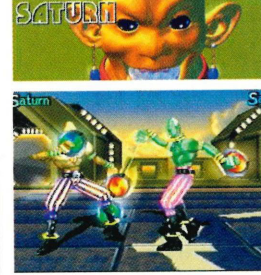
Big, hairy, loud mouthed - no it's not Rory McGrath, it's Gamof the axe-using alien beast who looks more like an Ewok on steroids than a potential world saviour. He has a certain 'Honey Monster' feel to him too, as you can clearly see



CHIP HIT

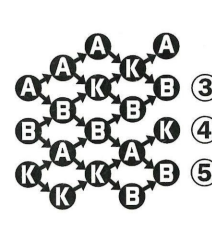
↓ ↓ ↓ & K, B
BEHIND THROW
→ ↓ ↓ ↓ ← & K

PLASMA COMBO
B Type - After 4, A



SATURN DYER

This conehead alien owns the cheesiest grin in the game. Plus his Plasma Yo Yos can cause serious damage to anyone stupid enough to stand in the way as he attempts to 'walk the dog' or alternatively a Plasma-aided 'round the world'



RUN MOVE

When running, hit A or B
YO YO ATTACK
→ & B, B

PLASMA COMBO
B Type - After 3, B



Saturn the cone head stops play and decides to give Gerelt a good tickle

If you're that way inclined, you can always check out the rankings to see who's the hardest bloke about



Gerelt rusts his iron pants as freaky little Gore suddenly grows to over 50 times his normal size. Gulp!



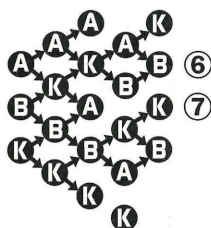
...room, whips out his Plasma and starts slashing the screen to reveal the other characters from the game. June pops in and reappears and drops aforementioned bloke to the floor. In anger he produces a Plasma ball, slams it to the ground and good Doctor, he whacks the screen, showering you with sparks. When they clear, the logo pops up and it's time to rock





ZELKIN FISKEKROGEN

If your gran's budgie flew into that transporter machine from 'The Fly' just as a heavyweight boxer was having a quick sit down, I'm sure the outcome would look something similar to Zelkin. He's fairly quick and has several energy-punishing punch moves too



JUMP MOVE
While jumping hit A & B

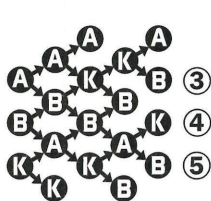
ALTERNATIVE COMBO
→ ↘ ↓ ↘ ← & K rapidly

PLASMA COMBO
K Type - After 6, ↑ & K



VECTOR PX-02C

Slow and bulky, but extremely powerful, this robotic rascal appears to be an early prototype for Robocop - minus the patronising Yank voice box. His mechanoid armour protects him against Plasma attacks for a while, but it won't last forever. Beware!



RUN MOVE 1
While running, A or B

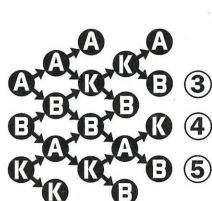
RUN MOVE 2
While running, hit K

PLASMA COMBO
B Type - After 4, K



GORE GAJAH

He's got a huge veiny forehead, protruding ears and a sort of gas mask snout to be an early prototype for Robocop - minus the patronising Yank voice box. His moves consist mainly of projectile attacks and he has the ability to grow to 50 times his original form and squash his opponents into the ground



SIZE OF A HOUSE
↓ ↓ ↓ wait and then ↓ ↓ ↓

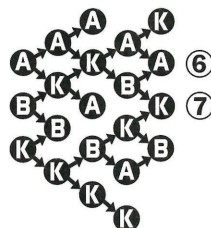
LIE DOWN
↓ & G & K

PLASMA COMBO
Type - After 5, A



JUNE LIN MILLIAM

This pretty young thing with a pulsating Plasma ring looks a bit like Bjork in a pair of kinky boots if you ask me, but she's a tough little cookie with plenty of high kicks, high-pitched squeals and loads of ring-related rucking moves tucked deep inside her arsenal



PROVOCATION
↓ ↑ & K, A, A, → G, B

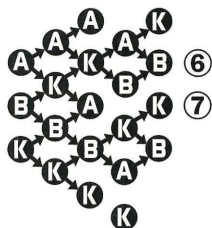
THROW
When opponent on ground, get close to their legs and press → & K

PLASMA COMBO
K Type - After 7, ↑ & K



RIMGAL

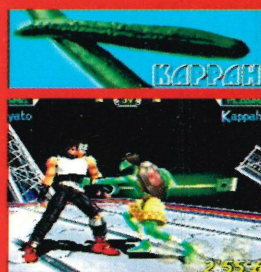
As a Primal Rage reject, Rimgal enters the arena armed not with a Plasma weapon like the others, but with a primitive oversized skull stuck on top of a huge stick. He can use his tail for long attacks though and those teeth can inflict some serious love bites



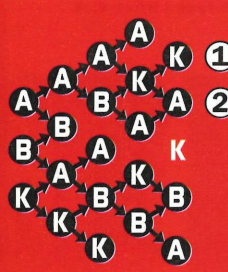
AIR MOVE
When opponent is in air, hit ↓ ↑ & K

LIE DOWN
Hit ↓ twice

PLASMA COMBO
K Type - After 6, K



KAPPAH
Here's your bonus character who pops up whenever he wants. Despite the cucumber artwork that precedes him, Kappah looks like a cross between a Ninja turtle and that Sandy cannibal bloke out of Monkey. Very weird and very powerful.



KAPPAH'S KOMBOS:

RUN MOVE
While running hit K & G

THROW MOVE
→ → ↓ ↓ ↘ ↘ & A or B

PLASMA COMBO
After 2, A

Note: The button configurations in Star Gladiator are a bit bizarre to say the least. For some reason, Capcom has named all the buttons G, K, B and A. Don't ask me why. So, before you start ringing our office moaning about how the G button doesn't exist on your pad, here's how they all work out...

G = X BUTTON

K = CIRCLE BUTTON

B = TRIANGLE BUTTON

A = SQUARE BUTTON

The shoulder buttons double up as they not only move you around your opponent (like Tohshinden) but they also do all these crazy things too...

A & G = L1

B & G = L2

Back & G = R1

Forward & G = R2. Okay?



Once you manage to work out the more basic button combos, you'll be rewarded with several visually pleasing attacks



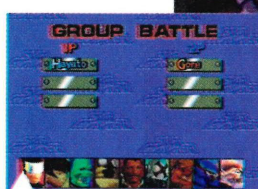
Included is a handy training mode which allows you to practice your many moves



Arcade mode is a one player battle through all the Star Gladiators on offer



Grab a friend and bang your heads together until they bleed in the Versus mode



Group Battle mode, where you select a team of dudes and set them against each other

Read it and weep! Robotic overlord Vector raises his fists in glory as he wins yet another battle to the finish

Star Gladiator

► armed with a pair of Plasma Yo-Yos. Gamof looks like a fat axe-wielding Chewbacca, Gerelt is a 21st Century Errol Flynn with Plasma dashing blade, Rimgal is a mutated dinosaur, war machine Vector is a slow but powerful robot and finally Gore is an Indonesian psychic despite looking like a mutilated Chihuahua with a massive veiny forehead.

So after the complex plot, some bizarre chat about a nutty professor and an abundance of extra terrestrial cyber warriors, how does it play? Initial impressions leave you reminiscing about Battle Arena Tohshinden, while pondering over the future possibilities of Namco's Soul Edge. It's all in glorious 3-D, each cosmic character comes complete with a huge weapon of some description and it's an all-out battle to the death that even manages to include the 'soon-to-be-compulsory-with-all-3-D-beat'em-ups' winning Ring Out feature. Cool.

The backgrounds deserve a special mention simply because they're the most spectacular I've witnessed for a while. Spacecraft battle in the night sky, huge stasis tubes stuffed with pulsating brains wobble about - there's even an anti gravity venue where, if you can successfully pull off a Ring Out win, you can sit back and watch your opponent zip off into the unknown.

There are plenty of secret bits and bobs to discover as well as attempting to suss out all the characters' numerous moves and combos. Getting to control Doctor Bilstein is one such secret, as is the mysterious hidden bloke, Kappah. And messing around with crazy button jiggery pokery during the loading screen can reveal hidden treats such as the ability to fight in the dark.

But despite all these beat'em-up bonuses, some of you may be getting a tad bored with fighting

games on the PlayStation by now and the prospect of another one appearing on your console may just put you off them altogether.

Well, let me assure you, if you play this game for a substantial amount of time you'll soon forget the likes of Tohshinden, Zero Divide and Criticom and immediately start falling in love with 3-D fist fighting all over again. I promise. This game is the business.

It's become the norm for fighting titles nowadays to allow players not only to pummel seven shades out of one another with a variety of punches, kicks and slashes, but introduce them to numerous 'special moves'.

Star Gladiator is no exception to this rule, but Capcom has introduced new playing tactics which increase the onslaught of energy-zapping fun, plus up the playability factor via new Plasma Combos. This means each different fighter belongs to a particular combo grouping, of which there are three. The various groups (A Type, B Type and K Type) have a certain amount of pre-determined attack moves that can be linked together without even stopping to catch your breath.

Certain combos won't be allowed if the character selected doesn't belong to that group and the only way to find out which group your selected bloke belongs to is either read the instruction manual or check out our handy cut-out-and-keep guide found elsewhere in this review.

In addition, there's a Plasma Final Move to be worked out. Take a brief look at the Plasma Combo information we've provided here and you'll notice a number. They refer to a certain character. If your character is the one noted and you manage to successfully do their Plasma Combo and end up pulling off the final attack move noted, your finishing move will be a Plasma Final Move.

These range from throwing opponents into the air and impaling them on the way down (like Gerelt),

slicing them into small bite-sized pieces (Saturn's Final Move) or producing an oversized hammer outta nowhere and whacking them into the ground (Vector's speciality). I know it all sounds bloody complicated and I suppose it is to a certain degree, but stick with it and it'll all become second nature. Honestly. No, really.

So apart from the complex finger-twister combos, Star Gladiator comes across as a hugely playable arcadey rival to the likes of Soul Edge and Tekken 2 and leaves the somewhat basic 3-D fighting titles such as Criticom and Tohshinden firmly in the shade. The characters feel good to play along with, special light sourcing effects like the final winning impact blow look superb, the audio does its job perfectly (except for the horrendous booming "Staaaaarr Glad-E-A-Turrrrr" as you start the game) and overall, Capcom's latest slap spectacular looks set to take the PlayStation fighting world by storm.

All the usual beat'em-ups trimmings have been added to make this as playable as Capcom's world dominating Street Fighter series (including a thrilling wall feature where characters bounce off an invisible barrier as well as having their fighting power increased tenfold) plus give current beat'em-up king, Tekken 2, a run for its money on the vanity front too.

What else can I say? It's generally an all-round value for money title with enough fiddly bits to ensure that you won't complete it on your first go or get bored with it within hours. It holds all the attractions that a good solid beat'em-up should and any fan of either Capcom or the genre should give this some serious attention. If 2-D fighters are your bag though, then there's plenty of Capcom-related slappers coming your way soon that should please you. But if you want to experience the kind of thing the future holds, then pick up a copy of this as soon as possible. It's a beauty.



One of the many hidden extras reveals a nifty new playing mode where you fight in the dark! Wayhey!

Close up button jiggery pokery results in some crazy 'hands-on' attacks which are more often than not quite amusing too



Orville's big brother, Zelkin pummels old Hayato with his huge spiky claws of fury



GENRE COMPARISON

Game Tekken 2

Software House Namco

A damn fine fighting title if ever there was one. Namco's latest is a definite rival to Star Gladiator, although on some counts doesn't match it blow for blow. Capcom have taken the 3-D angle one step further this time and it shows, resulting in a worthy second purchase to the likes of Tekken 2, or visa versa.

PRO SCORE

GAME Star Gladiator
CONTACT 0171 368 2255

GENRE Beat'em-up
RELEASE DATE November

SOFTWARE HOUSE Capcom/Virgin
PRICE £49.99

GRAPHICS 9
SOUND 8
GAMEPLAY 9
LASTABILITY 8

Not as ground-breaking as Capcom would have us believe, but this, its first 3-D battler, certainly has enough aces up its sleeves to take it to the top. Quirky colourful characters, awesome background scenery, astonishing special moves and some of the most complex combo configurations known to man all add up to deliver a solid portion of interplanetary hardman action. It should send excitement shivers down the spines of all who play it and stubborn stains rushing across the under garments of the boys at Namco HQ.

OVERALL OUTTA 10

DAN Piddles all over Tekken 2 from a great height. A bona fide office favourite if ever there was one

STEVE Dan's talking rubbish. A game's only an office favourite if everyone likes it. And I don't. So it's not

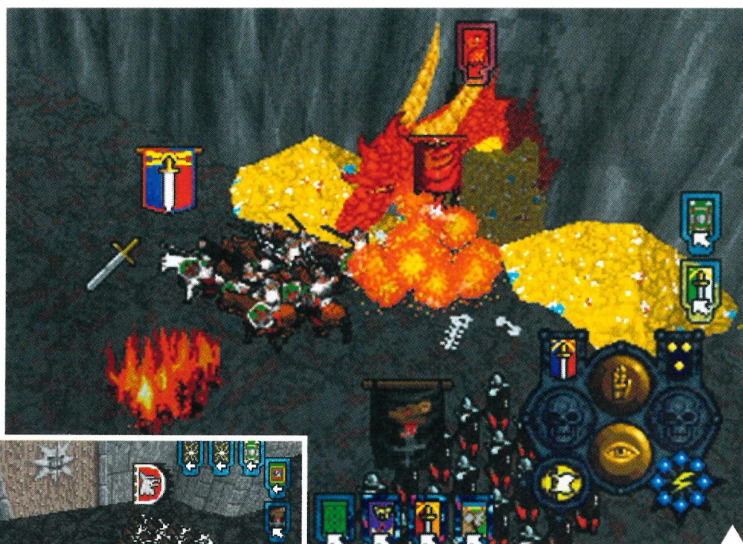
ANDY Steve should be ignored as he never knows what he's on about at the best of times. This is top

ALEX It's a playable little monkey that needs a good spanking in order to be mastered. Tekken 2 is for girls

Warhammer

Shadow Of The Horned Rat

Cast aside those dice and tiny lead figurines. It's time to immerse yourself in the world of real-time role playing from the comfort of your own console



Touchy fellas these mythical beasts. One ill advised verse of 'Puff the Magic Dragon' and it all kicks off



This became something of a catchphrase for my troops, as they legged it every time a scrap looked imminent

Back when video games still involved helping a frog cross the road, another form of interactive entertainment ruled the roost. Role playing allowed fantasy fans, or nerds as they're better known, to pretend they really did live in magical kingdoms awash with orcs, goblins and buxom birds in metal bikinis. It involved throwing dice to simulate random events in this imaginary world, giving yourself a name like Thragbladder The Unhygienic and not going out very often.

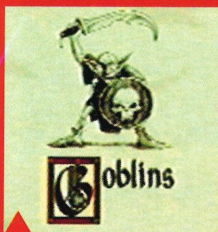
Many attempts have been made over the intervening years to incorporate the heady thrills of RPGs into the framework of a computer game. Unfortunately, no matter how hard well-meaning software houses try, most of these attempts resulted in games that could generously be described as 'arse'.

That hasn't stopped Mindscape from having another go. It has teamed up with RPG guru Games



As you can see, the 2-D map is possibly the most eye catching and useful feature

The I-Spy Book Of Warhammer



Goblins

GOBLINS
Physically weak, these irritating little gits are related to the more hefty Orcs. Their sheer numbers make them formidable foes and when cornered they exude a strong smell of pears



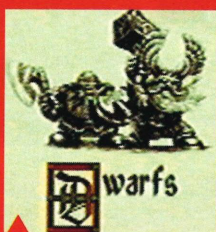
Orcs

ORCS
Bigger and meaner than humans, these Neanderthal looking brutes are vicious and single minded when engaged in battle. They're not unbeatable, but you can look forward to a tough scrap



Skaven

SKAVEN
Twisted and deceitful ratmen, the Skaven are dedicated to the coming of The Horned Rat. Merciless in battle, it's these fellas who are behind most of the skulduggery throughout the game



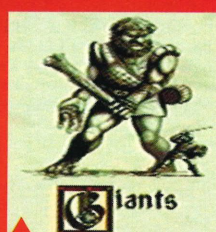
Dwarves

DWARVES
These chaps are squat and powerful. The Dwarven war with the Orcs goes back many centuries, and they'll often fight alongside you against their hated enemies. They have nice beards too



Humans

HUMANS
Barely out of nappies compared to the age and wisdom of the Dwarves, mankind is constantly fighting against the growing forces of Chaos. A bit noncey, but it's you so you can't complain



Giants

GIANTS
Partial to eating anything, Giants have two main weak points. They're incredibly thick and usually boozed up to the eyeballs. They work with Orcs, hoping to share any pickings from the battlefield



Those little banners around the edge represent other units not visible. Most of them are baddies



Our moustached hero, used to giving orders, tells Take That what to do

Workshop to adapt its popular epic, Warhammer. The spookily titled *Shadow Of The Horned Rat* asks you to step into the sweaty leather sandals of Morgan Bernhardt, leader of the oh-so-hard Grudgebringer mercenaries. His aim in life is simple – earn loads of dosh and become the commander of the biggest army in the world.

Normally this sort of behaviour would result in clashes with James Bond inside secret volcano bases. In the wacky Warhammer world it's as acceptable as setting up a private pension plan and washing your car on a Sunday morning.

The road to this goal is a rocky one, however. To earn greenbacks and respect you must work through whatever assignments are offered by Dietrich, your paymaster. He seeks out commissions, and negotiates a price. What he turns up could be anything from protecting a village from orc attacks to getting involved in a major war.

Whatever the job entails, you can be sure it'll involve lots of fighting – the combat sequences are where the main action takes place. You're presented with a rendered battlefield once combat begins. Press start, a roll of thunder heralds the declaration of battle, and the enemy make their advances. What happens next is up to you.

Victory comes when the opposing hordes have either been slaughtered or pummelled into surrender, and you can then count the loot and carry on to the next town. Along the way you'll hire reinforcements or roving mercenary units to expand your forces and make alliances with people you meet. They might ask for help or join you, but if your campaign takes a direction they don't like expect to lose their help.

Eventually you should earn a potful of cash and have a healthy sized army, which is just as well because you can expect to come up against



Sorry, I haven't got a clue what's going on here, although it seems to involve some monsters. Or something



While you, the player, can see whoever is on the map, your troops won't be able to attack until they see them



'Okay, Okay, enough with the 'Puff' business. And I'd avoid Dwarf Korma if I were you

Dragons

DRAGONS
Mercifully rare, these noble yet deadly beasts can cause huge damage. Luckily those that still exist spend most of their time hiding out in the mountains. Or advertising mouthwash on television



Military units vary in size and power, so you need to position your troops strategically. Apparently



Opening time at The Dragon's Balls Inn was always a bit of a crush



Warhammer

► dragons, giants and huge war machines, all working against the noble Empire. The question is, how long can you keep your army together in the face of a rising threat from Chaotic forces?

Warhammer is a slippery beast. At first I hated it – the lack of interaction and poor control over battles made it extremely difficult to get involved. However after a few days of playing, I started to make headway, although I suspect that was more to do with luck than any sort of tactical payoff. I kept expecting to find something more to the game that I'd somehow missed but eventually realised that this was it.

The only time you exert any sort of control over events is on the battlefield. It doesn't help that you need to win each fight with almost no losses, or it's impossible to win future skirmishes. You can't even choose where to move on the map, who to talk to or which supplies to take. Given the open-ended nature of the original RPG, this is a claustrophobic and linear experience.

The graphics are pleasant but the Playstation's

I hear you knocking, but you can't come in. Mostly because of your habit of waving swords at me



In a David Copperfield style, a wizard unleashes bolts of blue at the ravenous hordes. Ooh, that'll help

capabilities are hardly being stretched. The 3-D battlefields have some neat details but the battles degenerate into a confusion of coloured blobs milling around each other. The static story screens, while accompanied by some quality speech, could have been ported over from the Amiga. Sound is limited to some functional bellowing and general battle noises as well as a token medieval tune.

Admittedly if you stick with it things improve slightly, with more missions to choose from and a vague attempt at a story. But even then there is very little freedom to find your own way through the game. Any attempt to use planning and tactics during the fights is doomed to fail thanks to the unresponsive and generally cumbersome controls, so you usually just end up letting them get on with it.

This system, though lazy, actually works more often than not. It doesn't help that the enemy troops are fast and co-ordinated, while yours bumble about as you struggle to keep an eye on five different units all over the place. For a strategy game Warhammer is shockingly short on real strategy. Whether you want to fork out £45 for such a lightweight experience is up to you.



As the game progresses you'll be able to choose even more spells that won't work properly

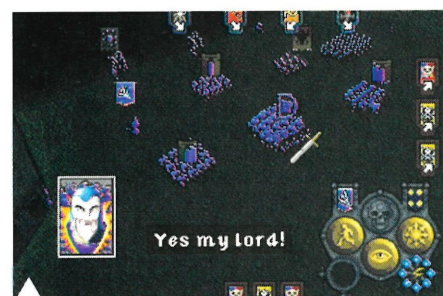


Windy Miller, cowering in his windmill home, instantly regretted taunting the Warhammer Lager Boys

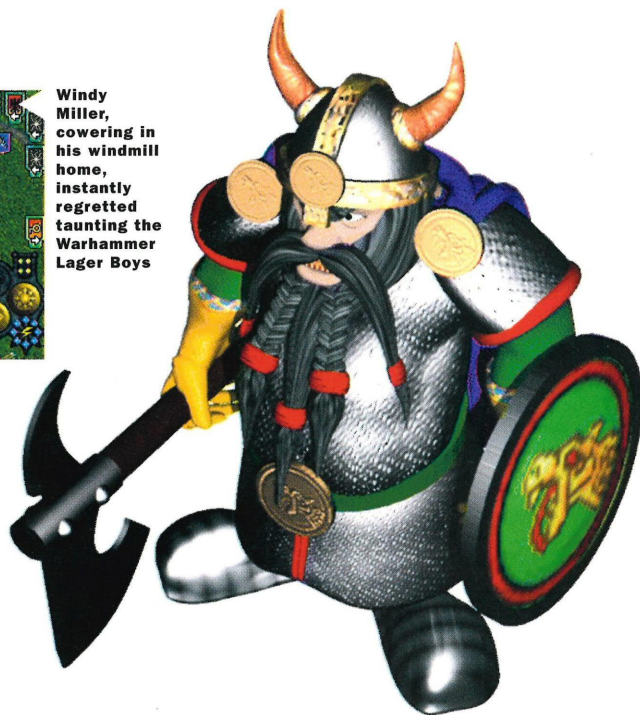
Get 'em lads!



The scenery can take damage just like you. Burn down too many villages and you're in big trouble, boyo



Night battles add atmosphere (and use fewer colours which makes them easier to draw)



PRO SCORE

GAME Warhammer
CONTACT 01444 246333

GENRE Strategy
RELEASE DATE Out Now

SOFTWARE HOUSE Mindscape
PRICE £44.99

GRAPHICS 7
SOUND 8
GAMEPLAY 7
LASTABILITY 6

With its Warhammer pedigree you'd expect something to get your teeth into. Something that takes a while to get the hang of, but with a satisfying nutty centre of gaming goodness. This is Warhammer's biggest failing. You assume that early failures are because you're not used to the controls, but even after days of play and memorising the manual there's still very little of substance here. It's really just a case of deciding which battle to join next. A frustrating and flawed game that deserved to be a lot better.

7
OVERALL
OUTTA 10

STEVE This is the type of thing you need to spend a lot of time with to get anything back. Bland I'm afraid
JAY I've never liked these sort of games, so asking my opinion on one is fairly pointless. I'm just not interested
ANDY Dan's been overly generous with this one. It's involved yes, but is also far too boring
ALEX As aesthetically pleasing as Bernard Manning, Warhammer is nonetheless massive – but not exciting

WASHINGTON MEMORIAL HOSPITAL
 Department of Psychiatry, Chicago, Illinois
CONFIDENTIAL

OTHER NAMES James, Jesus

SESSION 1

No. 3765

PATIENTS SURNAME Delgado

D.O.B. 4/31/71

RACE Hispanic

SEX Male

ART THERAPIST Kath MacDonald

RELEVANT HISTORY Initial assessment diagnosed Jimmy as having an acute personality disorder. There is no history of mental illness in his family.

COMMENTS

To confirm diagnosis I asked Jimmy to draw a self portrait. He proceeded to draw a picture of an aggressive Ninja War Lord committing Hari-Kari - labelling the drawing as "me". Jimmy told me his name was Yoshimitsu and is convinced he has supernatural powers to heal himself.

Suicidal tendencies and Jimmy's confident belief that he can cheat death are very worrying. I now believe Jimmy may be in some form of manic psychosis.

NOTES

Yoshimitsu is a character from Tekken II, Jimmy's Sony PlayStation video game, which he plays continually.

SIGNED

DATE

7/5/96



3765



SONY



DO NOT UNDERESTIMATE THE POWER OF PLAYSTATION

namco

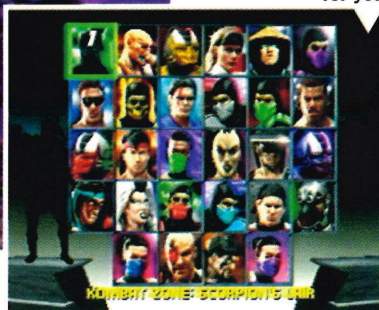
Mortal Kombat Trilogy

The video game equivalent of Police Academy returns in yet another attempt to woo those hard earned tenners from your pocket. Just say no, kids



Once again, a hefty hit will result in blood spurtage all over the place. The finishing fatality moves are even more gruesome

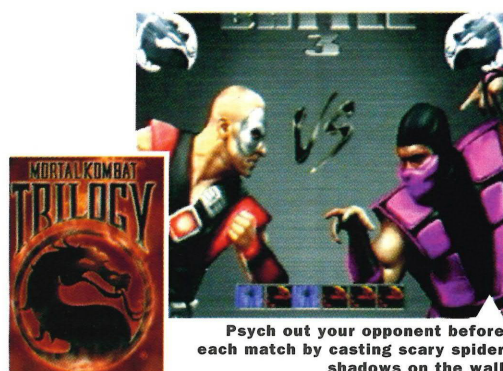
All your favourite pugilists from every single MK game ever are here, specially for you



None of your slapping and hair pulling here, MK girls fight with razor sharp fans and the like



The inclusion of all the previous backgrounds means that you might never see the same scene twice



Psych out your opponent before each match by casting scary spider shadows on the wall

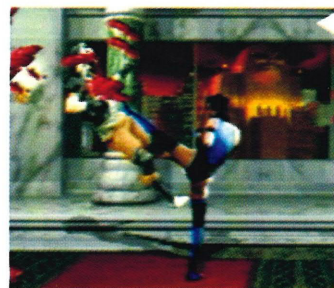


Kung Lao tries his hardest to prove the vicious rumours that Sonya Blade does indeed wear a wig

What can you say? It's Mortal Kombat, innit? It's already been around for donkey's years, in various similar guises distinguishable only by the handy addition of a number after the name. Chances are you've got one such version gathering dust right now. So why would you want this then? Well, it's not, as the title suggests, all three games on one CD. It's all the characters and all the special moves from the previous three games stirred into a broth of fists and violence. Oh, and should you care, all the background graphics are here as well.

There's also a new hidden character, Chameleon, for you to find and conquer. Some of the older characters have got a new look, and some characters appear twice in various guises and with different moves. Other than that, this is business as usual over in Kombat Korner. Gory fights played out against gloomy gothic backdrops, with characters straight out of a bad Gwar video. You'll already know if this is your thing or not, so I'm feeling fairly redundant here.

For that reason, and as this is only a two page review, I'll get straight to the point. I've never



'Eat blue leather thigh-boot, sleaze boy!' bellows Kitana as she fends off another hairy palmed admirer

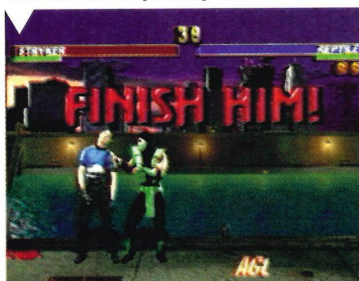
Cheat Petite

- **Random Character Selection:** Press **↑** and start at the character select screen
- **Play as Classic Characters:** Highlight the MK Trilogy version of the combatant on the Select Screen then press Select. This works for Kano, Rayden, Jax, and Kung Lao
- **Play as Chameleon:** Select Human Smoke and then hold Back+HP+HK+BL+RN until he appears before any round starts
- **Dead Pool Fatality:** Hold LP+LK then uppercut your opponent
- **Choose Your Background:** In the character select screen press **↑**+Start on Sonya. You will hear a boom and the screen will shake. After you have picked your character you will be able to choose from any stage. The player who does this trick gets to pick the stage
- **Secret Configuration Screen:** Go to options. Put the cursor over the game configure box and hold all top buttons L1+L2+R1+R2 and hold up to at least three seconds. The screen will shake then the **?** is selectable. The options are: 1 Button Fatalities, Instant Aggressor, Normal Boss Damage, Low Damage, Health Recovery

Is it Mortal Kombat, or is it the Scary Bloke Formation Dance Team making the most of their lottery grant?



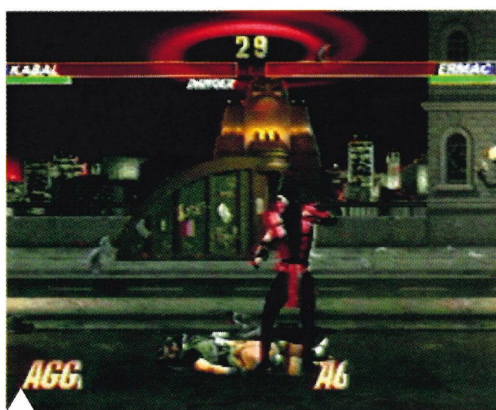
We all know what happens when this appears. Wrench the joypad this way and that for a splaterry end



How much blood do these people have in them any way? They lose gallons during every match



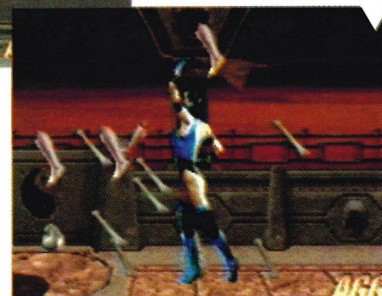
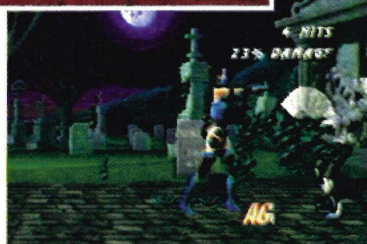
A lunch-losing finale, but if you look closely, you'll see three legs flying through the air. What's going on there then?



There may be fighting on the street, but don't you dare confuse this with Street Fighter. That's a completely different kettle of old rope



Be prepared to lose frequently if you're not a special move master. Not much fun for beginners or the easily bored



Jade lives up to her name by pulling off her famous 'turn green and hit people' move - always a winner at parties



quite got round to liking the MK games, for several reasons. Right from the first game, I've seen it as little more than a painfully average beat'em-up hiding behind some nice graphics. And as the subsequent sequels added nothing other than new characters, I've had no reason to change my opinion. However, this is supposedly the definitive version. Ultra Mortal Kombat, with three games worth of characters and moves to choose from. If any title can make me see the light, this should be it.

And yet it still leaves me cold. My primary complaint is that the basic moves are the same for each character. This means that you have to master the long winded special moves if you want to make the most of your characters. Fair enough.

But Mortal Kombat is the only fighting game I've played that makes it virtually impossible to enjoy, or even win, without these moves. This had led to it becoming the focal point for a whole new generation of computer nerds. The sort of people who get all excited because they've heard that Sonja Blade has a secret fatality move, and won't

rest until they've found it. When I've gone public with my dislike of Mortal Kombat in the past the rallying cry of fans has been 'But you really have to learn all the special moves to see the game at its best'. Sorry, but if I've spent £45 on a game, I'd like to be able to enjoy it without being a finger contortionist.

If you've already got MK3 then this is hardly worth the effort. But if you really do hanker after an old skool beat'em-up, it might just fit the bill. In my opinion, with games like Star Gladiator pushing the genre further towards a true 3-D environment, where you can move anywhere and strike in any number of ways, playing a 2-D beat'em-up with only five or six basic moves just feels like a flat and frustrating experience.

In the music world, the release of a Greatest Hits album usually heralds the break up of the band. Witness Take That's tragic demise for proof. As this is supposed to be 'The Greatest Mortal Kombat In The World...Ever!', we can only hope that Johnny Cage and his lycra wearing pals follow suit and stop bothering us. Oh, one more thing. It's spelt 'Combat', OK?



To its credit, the game is very fast, but then that's probably because the graphics are 2-D, which isn't very 'now' at all

PRO SCORE

GAME Mortal Kombat Trilogy
CONTACT 0171 334 5000

GENRE Beat'em-up
RELEASE DATE Out Now

SOFTWARE HOUSE Acclaim
PRICE £44.99

GRAPHICS 8
SOUND 7
GAMEPLAY 6
LASTABILITY 6

It's hard not to be wary of this release. Even after MK3 there were ominous whisperings, usually involving the words 'milking it', so this bumper bundle will hardly help matters. No matter how many characters, moves or (be still my beating heart) background graphics they throw into the mix, it still comes up smelling of Mortal Kombat. An over-rated game at the best of times, this has done nothing to convert me to the cause. Or should that be 'kause'? Consider this horse dead, and flogged into submission.

6½
OVERALL OUTTA 10

STEVE Hate to do it, but I have to agree totally with what Dan has to say for once

JAY Good value if you don't own any of the previous versions, but please God, make this the last of them

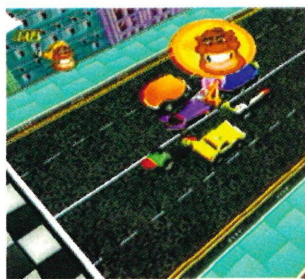
ANDY MK stands above the rest on the most hyped and biggest disappointment scale. Nothing new here

ALEX Too much, too little, too late for GT here. Like the original bobby's helmet, it's 'old hat'

Supersonic Racers

Imagine Micro Machines in a Wacky Races-type environment and you're kinda halfway there. Yes, it's another fun-packed driving bonanza full of comical cars and deranged drivers. Hold onto your sides...

Car chaos on the starting grid is a common thing with this game



World Tour...

In the Speed Trial mode, there are a whopping 26 selectable tracks within the 10 selectable locations around the world. This allows advance playing time to get to grips with each course and your vehicle's alter egos (it will turn into various other modes of transport on different tracks. A boat for water, a rocket for space etc) before diving into any of the other competitive modes of play. Here are the tracks from around the supersonic globe...

A nice idea this one. Multiplayer action on one console – cool. Millions of tracks to razz about on – that's fine and dandy. How about an all round top racer – erm, well that's not specifically true actually. As a single player game, it fails to excite, but add two or more players and you're in for a couple of hours worth of comical racing fun. Supersonic Racers wasn't immediately liked when it arrived at our offices, but we gave it a fair crack of the whip and over the days, members of the team were slowly coming to terms with it and some actually enjoyed playing it. Not all of them, mind.

But before I go overboard and list all its bad points, let's look at the good ones: In all honesty, it's very similar to Micro Machines. There's an abundance of tracks (over 30 to be precise), loads of different characters and plenty of differing playing modes to fiddle about with.

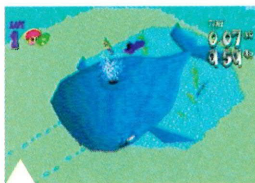
But – and here comes the slagging – considering there's a new Micro Machines version coming out on the PlayStation any day why bother doing it? Also, why bother putting 30 tracks on offer when they're all shorter than a midget on his knees? You

don't get a chance to put your foot down and really race with these tracks. You're constantly tapping the accelerator and hitting the brakes in order to get safely through the course, leaving the red-hot adrenaline rush for the last straight run to the finish line.

Saying that, the multi-player options can cause hilarity as well as confusion (if you've got eight joypads and two multi-taps that is), and they're quite enjoyable for a while. Eight players racing onscreen at once is a good gaming experience, but the attraction soon fades as frustration of keeping your car on the track takes over and you're left huffing, puffing and swearing yourself blue.

Another point? Okay, the characters. Well for starters, the original sketches look like they've been torn from the wall of a nursery school. They look naff and fit too perfectly into what is considered the role of a videogame range of 'comical' characters. There's a token bad bloke, a token babe, a kid, another bad bloke, another good bloke and on it goes, blandly churning up stereotypical drivers in equally stereotypical

Deep Sea



WHALE WIPEOUT

The main attraction of this water course is the massive whale you ride into. Once inside him, he'll fire you out of his blow hole, projecting you further up the track



SEWER SPILLOUT

Another underwater race here – this time a huge sewer outlet pipe that's causing the headaches. Get in its way and you'll be forced into the rocks and die



SUBMARINE CIRCUIT

Fairly bland compared to the other underwater courses with the only obvious graphical addition being some funny flat fish that are swimming about

Zepplins



SKY HIGH SPIN

You're racing your balloon mobile in the air this time, trying to dodge the occasional pigeon and keeping out of the clouds while floating around a lot



BLIMP BROTHER

Another airborne track, complete with pigeons and clouds, plus there's large spiky bomb type things knocking around for you to run into. Beware!

Haunted House



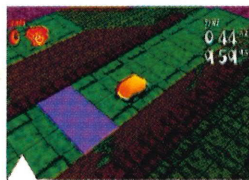
HAUNTED HOUSE

Spooky? Creepy? Kooky? No, not really. Simply a dark track with the odd coffin lying around to emphasise the Haunted House theme



GRAVEYARD GHOULS

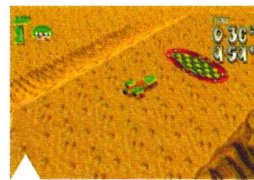
Same as the first Haunted track, except this one swaps coffins for gravestones and large crosses. Very scary? No, I don't think so



DUNGEON DANGER

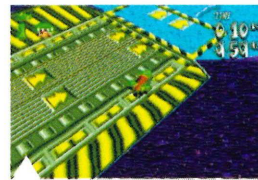
Same theme, but at least this one takes advantage of the PlayStation's depth facility, letting you ride down ramps to lower levels

Space



ASTEROID ANTICS

You're on the Moon, or somewhere similar, and the only thing to worry about is the way your anti-gravity car seems to float about



CRATER CRAZE

As before, but with more craters and some electrified fences surrounding the main playing area. This track can be quite annoying at times



Wayhey! What a crazy bunch of blokes we are! We all look daft and speak several languages too. Oh, we're so great, and funny with it!

vehicles. The good guy drives a sports car, the army bloke drives a jeep, the babe drives a little buggy affair and so on and so on. Originality anyone?

Actually, I shouldn't be saying the game isn't original, that's a bit unfair. Supersonic Racers is an original title, what with the eight player option and the like – which I do confess is rather good – but in almost every other department it slips into the bland, depressing world of those 'funny' racing games that have come and failed before it.

Even the music's crap. It certainly isn't suited to a "lightening fast burn up" racing game (that's the press release chat by the way). It sounds as if Mindscape was developing an RPG at the same time as Supersonic Racers and someone mixed up the soundtracks during programming. They don't inspire you to race around like a crazy cartoon racing driver – the only inspiration I got was to lean over and turn the volume down.

So, to briefly recap: What you've got here is a multi-track, multi-player, multi-character cartoon racing game that at first glance could look like a Micro Machines game. But it isn't. The pretty ►

Supersonic selectables

You have eight selectable drivers to choose from during the game, so here's brief rundown on who they all are and what they're like when they get behind the wheel



DR DIABOLICAL
A bit like Wacky Races' Dick Dastardly, the doctor has many devious tricks up his sleeves. He's cunning, dangerous and someone who must be watched carefully if you want to win



DUNKUM SKYSCRAPER
This towering basketball boy plays by the rules and gets annoyed when other drivers don't act accordingly. If you break any of the track laws, you can expect a visit from Dunkum



GENERAL BLAST 'EM
A gung-ho army bloke who likes people to be upfront and honest with him. But only because it gives him a better chance of blasting hell out of them with his huge army shooter



JOHNNY JET
An all-round good egg, Johnny's a determined racer who plays up to his annoying good guy image with an equally irritating cheesy grin. He manages to scrape first place quite often too. The ponce



LUCY LUSH
As cute as a cuddly little bunny, our lovely all-American TV reporter plays by the rule book and despises anyone who plays dirty. She's very quiet, but lets her behind the wheel antics do the talking



SLOTH & MARTHA
Martha wears the trousers in this relationship as the underling Sloth bows to her every command without question. She's a ruthless witch underneath those beautiful looks though, so watch out



OSWALD DOBERMAN
Being a manic criminal, Oswald won't bother avoiding things that are in his way while racing - he'll smash right through them! He's used to driving fast in his former career as a getaway driver

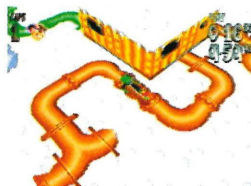


VAROUKA
This little brat isn't the most experienced driver, but she makes up for it with her wild will to win. Get on the wrong side of her when she's in one of her moods though and you'll live to regret it - if you're lucky!

North Pole



SKI LIFT SCREAMERS
A snowy track where you must hitch a ride on a ski lift to get to the final section of the track. Simple in theory, but can prove damn frustrating in practice



REFINERY RACERS
Using the on-track ramps once more, you'll fly over snow-covered pipes and other refinery items of industrial merit. Again, it's another bland track



ICE FLOW FROLICS
Another rampfest here. Use them to land on ice-spouting pipes, which in turn will make sure your motor reaches the other side of the sprawling gaps

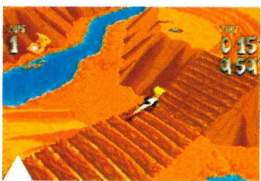


PERSIAN PALACE
Loads of raised tiled floors, a bit of a swimming pool in the middle and plenty of crazy corners. Not one of the more complex tracks available in the game

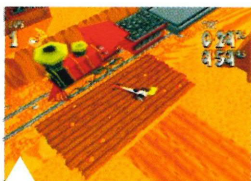


ROOFTOP RAMPAGE
You race around the tops of Persian buildings this time around, only they're not very big so falling off the sides is quite easy and equally as annoying

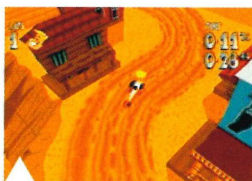
Wild West



CANYON CAPERS
More of the same. One 'new' bit is a two-way fork in the road, where you must choose the right lane to go down in order to complete the race



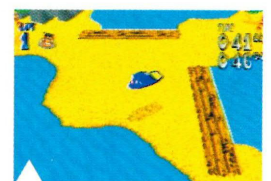
RAIL RIOT
Basically the same idea as the Ski Lift one. Simply hop aboard the train to get to the other part of the track. If you can be bothered



WILD WEST WORKOUT
A short and sweet track full of bends and wild west type buildings. All you have to do is stay on the track and cross the finish line



CANNON CASTAWAY
A watery track with a sizeable pirate ship stuck in the middle for a daft laugh. Drive into it and you'll be punted out up stream

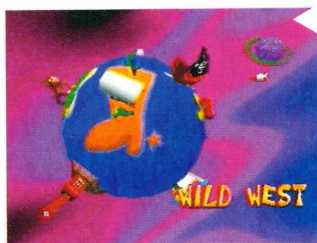


CROSSOVER COAST
Again on water, but now you're expected to use the floating logs as potential ramps and you do indeed 'crossover' certain sections

Supersonic Racers

► slow paced action isn't exactly complemented by the extreme shortness of all the racing circuits or the blandness of its characters, and the 'wacky' on-track obstacles put a rather large gap in the minute amount of racing you actually get.

The eight player mode is treat, as are the other multi-player options, but these can get very boring very quickly. Okay, it looks nice enough and all that and I suppose it's a brave attempt at something new, but it simply doesn't work for me – especially as a single player game. Sorry. I'd wait for Micro Machines V3 if I were spending any of my cash.



A comedy map guides you around each set of tracks

Eight player on-screen action doesn't get much better than this, but the fun will soon fade if you play for too long



It's over the side for you my boy! Banging into other cars often results in someone going off road



Metropolis



BRIDGE BLASTER
Loads of long straight streets to burn around on this one, plus the added bonus of going over a huge bridge. Calm down, it's only a game



METRO MADNESS
A twisty-turny street course with plenty of overlapping carriageways and its fair share of long straights. At least you get to put your foot down for a while...

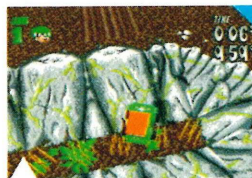


FREEWAY FURY
Pretty much the same as Bridge Blaster, except the lack of bridges. Tear around some American streets, full of long straights and tight bends

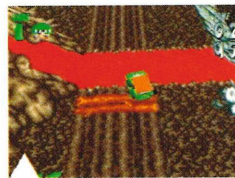
Jungle



CROC HOP
This track breaks halfway through, making you hop onto platforms being towed around by huge crocodiles in order to continue the race



TRICKS N TRAPS
Large gaps in the floor full of spikes are one thing to avoid, but the daft swings that you encounter require plenty of clutch control if you want to continue



LAVA LAPS
Fairly straightforward course, with the only obstacle being lava flows which you must jump with the aid of a ramp. Ooh, it's tricky

Take your pick

As well as a vast range of differing drivers and various tracks, you've also got a fair few playing modes to pick between too. Here are all the options on offer:



GRAND PRIX
Ten races with the main aim being to finish within to the top three drivers in order to continue. Fail and you'll be asked to complete a time trial round to continue, but there's only one crack at doing it. If you do succeed, and fail to come in the top three of the next race, it's Game Over. You only have one go at the final race too, so drive hard!



WORLD SERIES
This one's a bit like Mario Kart which dusty SNES owners out there might appreciate. Again there are 10 tracks to race about on, and your final finishing position at the end of each race will determine how many points have been awarded. So basically, at the end of the 10th race, the player with the largest number of points wins



KNOCKOUT
It's a Knockout! But this one has nothing to do with the likes of Stuart Hall, Eddie Wearing and hyperactive shop assistants knocking about in oversized penguin outfits. Eight races in total, where the player who finishes last is eliminated. All this survival of the fittest tyre-squealing continues until just two players are left. Last man standing wins



ONE ON ONE
Here you race against all of the other seven characters one at a time in order. A 'greying method' is used, with you and your opponent staying in full colour throughout and everyone else racing in all grey. All you have to do to continue is simply finish the race ahead of your opponent. You don't even have to come home in first place either



SPEED TRIAL
This can be very useful when you're a Supersonic virgin, because it gives the chance to check out all the tracks at your own pace. There's only one lap on each and the main purpose is to set your own best time. Break the current records and your driving prowess can be saved on to Memory Card allowing you to show off whenever you load the game. Hurrah etc



CHAMPIONSHIP
This mode of play is a tad confusing, but stick with it and you'll soon suss it out. It's a tournament series where players are selected to race against one another head-to-head. Everyone else does join in, but again they appear in grey, whereas the two main opponents appear in full colour. You'll have endless hours of fun with this one I'm sure

PRO SCORE

GAME Supersonic Racers
CONTACT 01444 246333

GENRE Racing
RELEASE DATE November

SOFTWARE HOUSE Mindscape
PRICE £44.99

GRAPHICS 6

SOUND 4

GAMEPLAY 7

LASTABILITY 5

Put nicely, this is a wonderful idea and a brave break from the norm on the PlayStation, but it'll fail to impress those of you who are after some serious long-term racing challenge. The tracks are way too short to inspire any enthusiasm in players and the overall look and feel of the game is one of a low-budget Micro Machines clone. The music is completely unsuitable too. Thumbs up for short term multi-player fun, but it's all over far too quickly, leaving you feeling more like a gin and tonic than feeling supersonic.

6
OVERALL
OUTTA 10

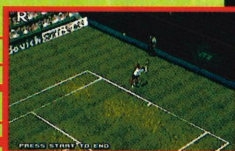
STEVE I only experienced the short term fun Jay mentioned and therefore I quite liked this I'm afraid

DAN A bit too Micro Machiney for my liking. Champion multi-player mind, but certainly not a single man's game

ANDY If you ignore the fact that it's hardly the most inspired release ever it's just about bearable

ALEX Needs at least two players to get any sort of lasting fun. Not quite next generation fodder

Tennis
Between TWO People
Is A
Beautiful
Thing
Between
Eight
It's
Incredible.



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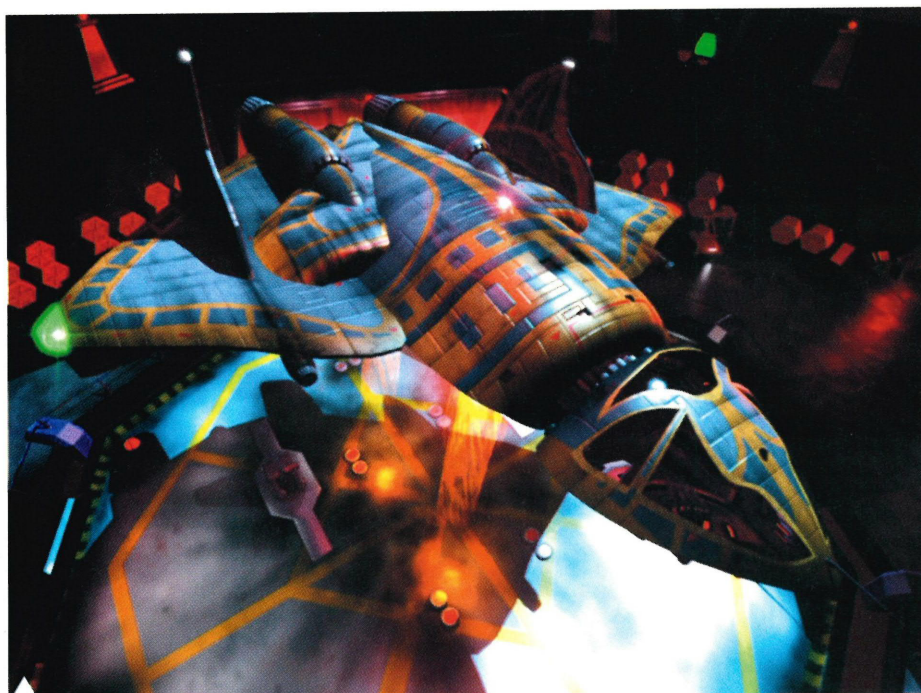
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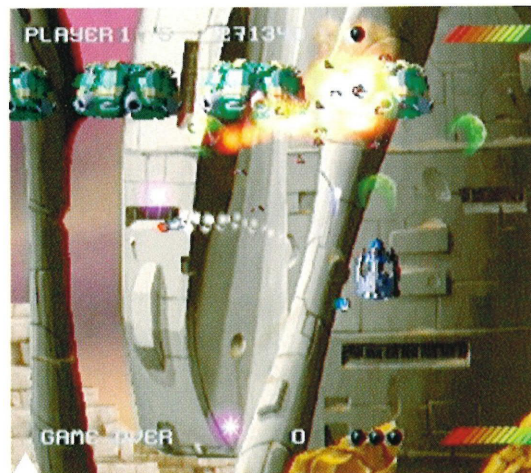


X2

This one will sort the men out from the boys and, sadly, it would appear I fall well and truly into the boys category. You can laugh. I'd like to see you do any better!



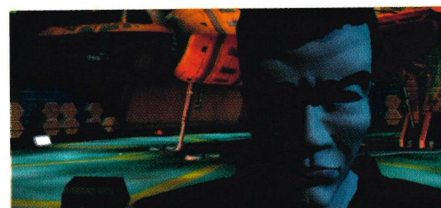
X2 features this ship and hundreds others like it. With something that looks this good though it seems a shame to have to destroy it



The enemies tend to attack in waves and it's a good job. Imagine how difficult it would be if they were unpredictable



The backgrounds are vastly improved over the original Amiga version. Remember it? Project X?



Right, even before I get going I'll say if you like games that equate to a nice, pleasant Sunday afternoon stroll in the park then turn past this review right now because X2 is not for you. Rather than being akin to a stroll this is more of an endurance test, something like one of those terrifying army assault courses or, even worse, being forced to sit through two episodes of Birds of a Feather back to back.

That's not too say I don't like it (X2, not Birds of a Feather), because at the moment I do. It's just that as soon as I pick up the joypad again I know any feelings of enjoyment will be wiped out by ones of frustration at my complete and utter lack of progress through the game.

Games don't normally wind me up as much as most people, probably because I can take them or leave them, but X2 had me gnashing my teeth and hurling the pad to the floor in next to no time.

Strangely this is both the game's best and worst point. On one hand, most of the time while you're playing you're in serious danger of opening the PlayStation lid, taking out the CD and stamping on it until it's smashed into a thousand pieces. On the other, when you're not playing you can't help



The intro is spectacular to say the least. A great demonstration of how effectively to use such a sequence to create an atmosphere

It's not all just shooting enemies, oh no. You have to shoot rocks sometimes as well! Top variety



The city backdrop is perhaps the most dramatic, with searchlights swooping through the sky

feeling that the CD is sitting in the corner of the room under the telly sniggering at your lack of games playing ability, maybe even nudging your copy of Destruction Derby 2 and telling it what a loser you are.

Eventually you lose your rag and think "Right, I'll show you matey" and before you know it you're pushing down that power button to put yourself through yet more torture and abject humiliation. And that's only on the easier of the two difficulty levels (I haven't plucked up the courage to try hard mode yet!).

Just in case any of you don't already know and also to at least try and give the impression that I'm doing my job properly, X2 is what's known as a shoot'em-up. Nothing more, nothing less. Become the pilot of a ship (well, one of a choice of three actually but you'll have to read about that elsewhere) that yes, you've guessed it, must single handedly save the planet from horde of marauding aliens, each and every one hell bent on the destruction of both you and your homeworld.

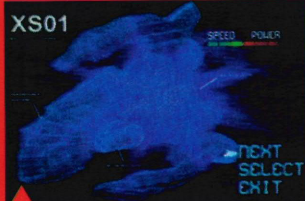
And how do you do this? By shooting them of course! Hence the genre name I suppose. What with there being about a million of them and only one of

If you're into explosions then X2 will definitely not disappoint. They're everywhere



Get Your Ships Out For the Lads!

XS01



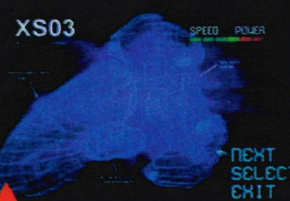
XS01 is a good craft for the beginner. It nicely balances out the two most important aspects and gives you enough speed to get out of the way of trouble and packs enough of a punch to trouble your enemies

XS02



XS02 may not be the nimblest of ships but when you hit something it knows it's been hit! This is definitely a ship for the more proficient player though, as a less experienced pilot will quickly find themselves boxed in

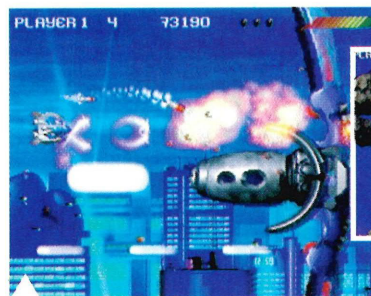
XS03



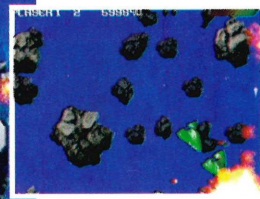
XS03 is perhaps the most difficult of the three for the novice to get to grips with. Moving around at this speed can cause problems in itself (colliding with walls for example) but the power just isn't there to get you out of a mess



This particular end of level boss has, in my opinion, phallic undertones. I wonder if it was intentional?



Bosses are easier to take out in two player mode, but in single it takes a lot of work



The asteroid field level will seriously test your reflexes as you fight and dodge at the same time

you, the odds aren't exactly stacked in your favour, so certain things have been done to try and level the playing field up a bit. Your ship is so easily upgradeable that when you destroy key enemy vessels their weapons are left floating in mid air and if you fly into them they automatically install themselves and start firing away. The things they can do these days eh? Amazing isn't it?

Handily, your opponent's ships don't possess the same ability and early on you can get the upper hand. Just about. When your weapons are powered up things are obviously destroyed much more easily because it doesn't take as many hits from a more potent weapon. This is fine as long as you don't lose all your lives and have to continue.

Thankfully you keep your weapons when you lose a single life, but if you lose them all it's back to square one and maybe it's just us, but trying to start even level 2 with minimum powered weapons is damn difficult. Level 3 is an absolute nightmare!

Technically, you don't have to play each level over and over again. Team 17 has supplied passwords for the end of each one so that once you've completed it you can come back at a later date and pick up where you left off. Great in principle but

When they're approaching destruction the enemies start to burst into flames giving you encouragement



Just to make things even more difficult you can also crash into the scenery

Another rockface for you to blast your way through. Only really causes problems when your weapons aren't powered up



X2

► for the reasons outlined above it doesn't work out like that. It seems to me (and admittedly this may just be because I'm rubbish) that the only way to make any real, meaningful progress is to start from scratch every time you die, build up your weapons and hope that your playing skills have improved enough to get you a little bit further, which, as a rule, they inevitably will have.

It's a long slow process, but if you like shoot'em-ups it will be an enjoyable one and you'll certainly get your money's worth. One thing worries me though. You lot are far too reliant on cheats these days for my liking. I don't mean to moralise but I can never understand the mentality of spending nearly fifty quid on a game and immediately wanting to cheat so you can see everything on offer without having to play the thing properly.

I'm hoping that some of you aren't like this, but having sifted through just a handful of the reader surveys that have come in from Issue 1 at least half of the ones I saw mentioned more cheats, or a free tips book.

Sad, but the thing is, I reckon the only way most people will see the later levels of this particular game is when a magazine prints all the passwords (probably us no doubt, after all, it would seem that this is what sells magazines these days). Do that though and it'll be your loss.

Persevere through X2 and the rewards will be so much sweeter; cheat and you'll more than likely end up feeling ripped off because it's just too hard. I know which I'd suggest, but at the end of the day

it's entirely up to you. See, there was a point in there somewhere!

There is a way to make it sort of easier without resorting to foul means though. Get a mate round (or in some cases no doubt, just get a mate), stick it on two players and have a crack at it like that. There are no extra enemies to kill so obviously two enormous laser weapons are better than one and this is probably the quickest (although by no means easiest) way to make your way through the game without wanting to murder each and every one of the programmers.

It's still virtually impossible to get anywhere fast but you can grind your way further into the game a little easier this way. All this moaning may have given you the impression that I don't like X2 but nothing could really be further from the truth. At times I absolutely loathe it but can I stop playing it? Well, no. There's something strangely perverse about the way inflicting this kind of pain on yourself is quite good fun.

The graphics are great for a shoot'em-up, the action couldn't be any more fast and frantic and the challenge couldn't be bigger. What more can you ask of any self respecting blaster? It's not for casual players – they'll soon cast it aside – but this could well be just the test accomplished shoot'em-up veterans have been waiting for.

The best traditional style shoot'em-up outside of an arcade is now X2 and if you want a game that looks good, plays well and will test your reflexes and stamina right to the limit over a long period, seriously consider investing in this. You've been warned though, don't come running to me saying it's too hard!

GENRE COMPARISON

Game Parodius Deluxe

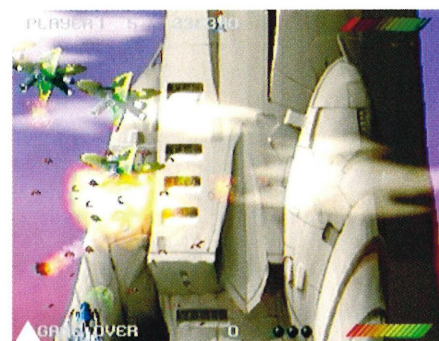
Software House Konami

Much more tongue in cheek than X2 Parodius Deluxe is now my second favourite PlayStation shoot'em-up. Cute graphics and a fantastic sound track just about make up for the game being a little too easy to complete. You'll go back to this one time and time again though, no matter how many times you finish it!

The levels vary in three ways. The backgrounds are different, they get harder and the enemies are bigger

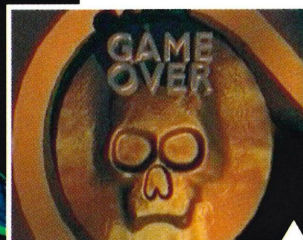
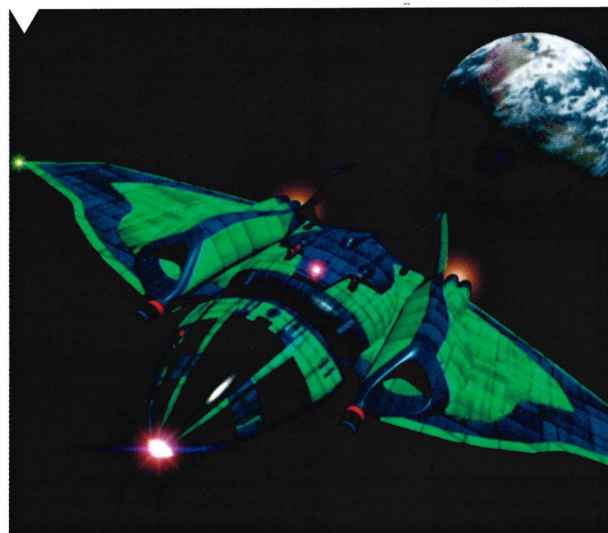


Some of the opposing ships have obviously been inspired by creatures from the insect world



The action switches at times from horizontal to vertical scrolling action. It's enough to make you dizzy!

I wonder why all shoot'em-ups are always set in space? Where's the realism, that's what I'd like to know!



It may look nice but you'll be sick of the sight of it in no time

PRO SCORE

GAME X2
CONTACT 01924 267776

GENRE Shoot'em-up
RELEASE DATE December

SOFTWARE HOUSE Team 17
PRICE £44.99

GRAPHICS 8

SOUND 8

GAMEPLAY 8

LASTABILITY 8

To be honest, I'm in a bit of a quandry over this. If I say yes, rush out and buy it I can expect a barrage of angry phone calls from parents bemoaning the fact that it's too hard for 'our little Johnny' and asking why I am encouraging people to pay money for something totally unsuitable. All I can say is, I think it's a treat, and it's made even better by being so difficult and having such a refreshing no nonsense attitude. A worthy effort indeed in my opinion – it's not my fault if you're not up to the challenge is it?

8
OVERALL OUTTA 10

DAN Just like the Amiga original, but with tarty graphics. Bored me rigid after about two minutes

JAY Bullets, bombs, weird spirally things – X2 simply can't be beaten. Well not on this platform at least.

ANDY As a one player game it's next to impossible but things really take off in two player mode

ALEX A frantic and fierce blast from the past that's been given some serious next generation make up

BRINGS OUT THE YOB IN YOU



Revolutionary 8 player simultaneous split screen
action for Playstation & Saturn (with multi-taps)

4 players for PC CD Rom*

Up to 27 stunning 3D tracks and backgrounds

Superb gameplay options including micro mode,
rumble mode and full multiple angle playbacks

Intelligent CPU cars that adapt to your ability

4 levels of difficulty vary from easy to crazy -

ideal for both learners and masters

Loaded with hidden options and secret tracks

The essential racing and fighting kart game

100% PURE GAMEPLAY

*Mega Drive 4 players only. Game Boy 1 player only.



**SO MAD, IT'LL DRIVE
YOU ROUND THE BEND.**

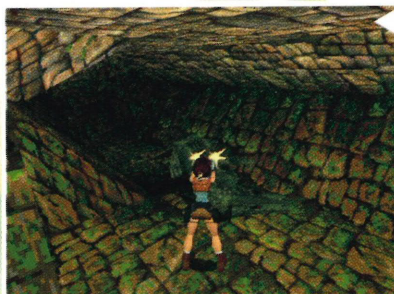
UBI SOFT - Vantage House - 1 Weir Road - Wimbledon - London SW19 8UX - Tel: 0181 944 9000 - <http://www.ubisoft.com>



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Tomb Raider

Investigate numerous caves and ancient buildings any self respecting explorer would think twice about entering, in Core Design's biggest and most challenging release to date



Crocodiles are dangerous both in and out of water. They're quick creatures you know



Lara moves as realistically, if not more realistically than many motion captured characters and she's only animated

The hype and expectation that has been unceremoniously dumped on Tomb Raider is, without a doubt, justified. Landing somewhere between Resident Evil and Doom, it incorporates elements of many games seen before and brings them back at you in a whole new scenario.

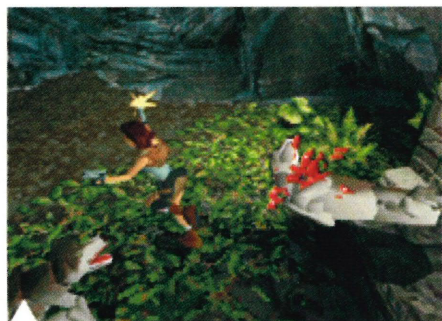
There are subtle differences such as complex puzzles and platform sections, but in every sense of the word this is an adventure, the like of which hasn't yet been seen on the PlayStation. The only game which comes close is the classic Res Evil. The differences between the two however, won't allow a comparison.

You take on the role of Lara Croft, a proper posh woman, who becomes estranged from her wealthy family when she strolls off willy nilly discovering ancient civilisations – a popular pastime if you can afford it. She funds these trips by publishing journals and books of her travels and discoveries of archaeological sites. This is where you take over.

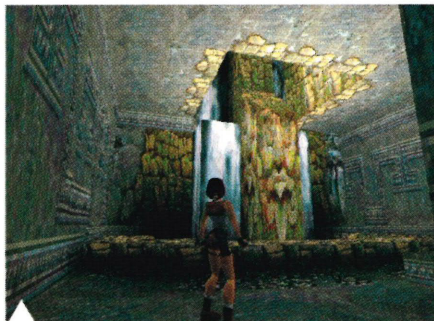
The training stage drops you into Lara's home as she is ready to leave. The crates and rooms are crammed with numerous obstacles strategically situated so you can get the hang of the controls and Lara voices exactly what you need to do for certain moves. This is a novel and great way to learn exactly what's what and is useful in every level.

Once the game begins, you find yourself in a strange environment to begin uncovering its secrets. The basic idea is to recover an ancient artefact known as The Scion, but as you progress a more important discovery is waiting to be made. What exactly this is nobody knows, as progress is slow and more than a little taxing. Apparently it takes over 100 hours of gameplay to unlock the secret behind Tomb Raider and we haven't had the time to devote to it as yet.

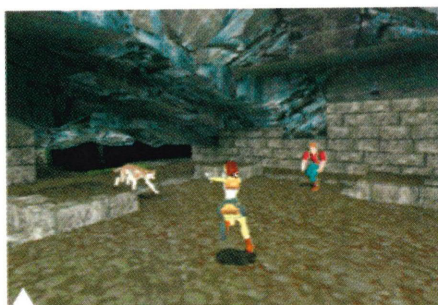
Throughout each stage you will be called upon to



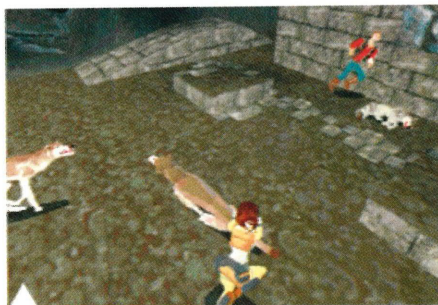
Some quick firing and crafty avoiding is required when attacked by packs of dogs – they can be lethal



Now where? Looks like it's possible to clamber up that rock. Don't leave anywhere unsearched



Big trouble is at hand! The bloke is by no means a friend of yours and will also be needing a few shots at him to glean some information...



...The dogs are plentiful so you need to be on your toes at all times. An attack could come from anywhere at any time...



...Look just die for crying out loud. There's some exploring to do and the enemies are getting in the way...



...Almost done now. Once these bloody dogs are out of the way this bloke here's in for a right grilling. He should keep them on leads...

blast numerous beasts ranging from bats and Tyrannosaurus Rexes to lions and crocodiles. There are plenty of new challenges and each stage prevents you from becoming too complacent.

There are many puzzles to tax your brain and ability. These vary massively from simple switch pulls to platform leaping and climbing. How well you fare depends on how adept you are at sussing out what does what. Sometimes when a switch is pulled the game will cut to another part of the level showing you the effect elsewhere – just to help a little. Block pushing or pulling is a large part of some stages and correct management of these is usually paramount.

Considering motion capture was overlooked for this release, the animation for Lara alone is eerily realistic. Whether she's leaping, sliding, falling, running or walking she never looks in any way unrealistic.

As the game progresses, it becomes more and more like a challenge you may have attempted at some stage before. It bears more than a passing resemblance to the old Prince Of Persia game especially leaping from platforms and clinging on for dear life. It seems to be an updated 3-D version of this classic release – by no means a bad thing.

To prove this point, Tomb Raider contains many

collapsing floors, switches, puzzles, backtracking and floors covered in spikes. Indiana Jones himself wouldn't fancy tackling these tombs. They have more traps and danger than anybody could hope for.

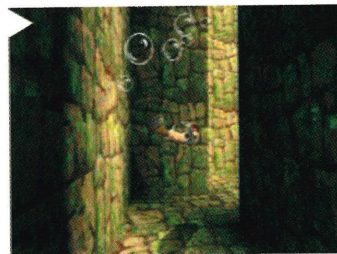
The levels were created using an in-house utility which allows the 3-D room meshes to be built from scratch, texture mapped, light sourced and linked together with the minimum of fuss. The trigger points and cameras were then added so the whole lot could be previewed for use in the game. And it has worked amazingly well.

Each and every level contains some excellent detail and realistic effects with rocks, trees, buildings and so on. Perhaps the most impressive however, are in the underwater sections you must explore from time to time. This is a nice touch which keeps things particularly tricky as crocodiles move much faster than humans underwater and your weapons become useless when submerged.

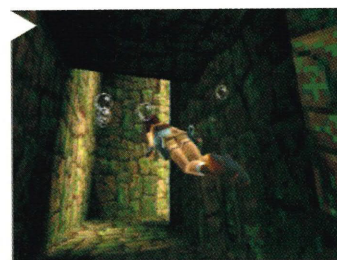
If there is a problem with Tomb Raider, it's that some of the graphics do glitch from time to time which spoils the overall look of the game. Occasionally the controls can be particularly tricky too, but this is ultimately what makes this such a challenge. One false move and it could all go horribly pear shaped.

Exploring the stages can become tedious and ▶

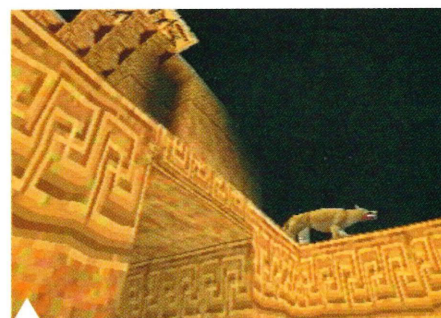
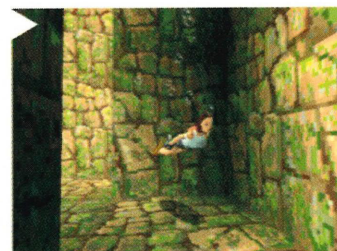
The detail is so great that even the air bubbles slowly rise to the surface



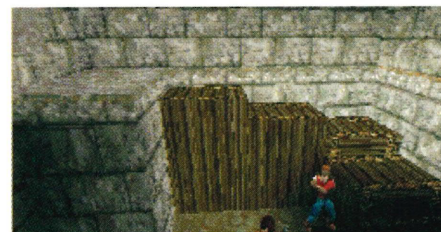
More often than not each stage will require some underwater exploration. Many secrets may be here as well as hidden rooms



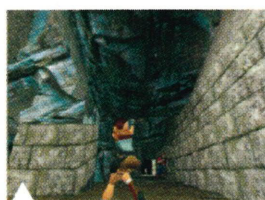
This may look like a cool, refreshing dip in the cavern waters but there's much more than just H2O in here



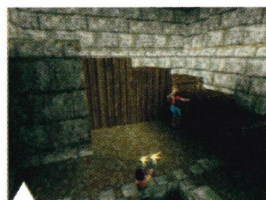
A quick look up reveals some danger on the ground above. Have your guns ready and your running shoes on



Right pal give me the information needed and your life may be spared. Or not...



...Get back here and face the music or you're in deep trouble my friend...



...Right that's it. Lara takes matters into her own hands to the man's loss

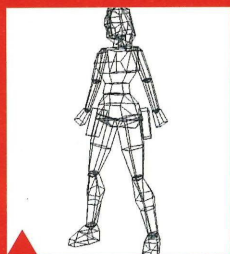


The tombs and buildings are intricately detailed and hide more than you'd think



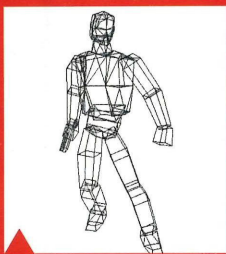
...Meanwhile the bloke is about to give Lara some information behind the whole scenario

In the beginning...



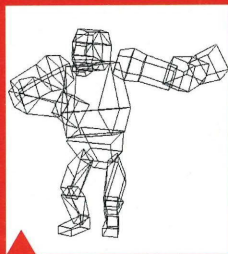
LARA CROFT

One tough lass and no mistake. She's the lead character who you must control through the entire game



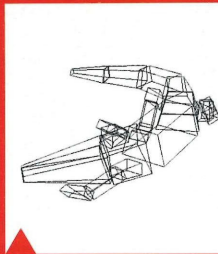
NASTY BLOKE

This guy crops up and will let loose with some of the conspiracy secrets. Assuming you shoot him a few times



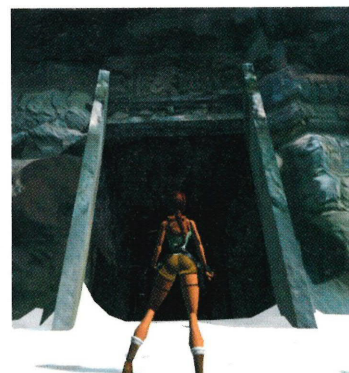
GORILLA

Big powerful and more than a handful for anyone. These are plentiful and very quick creatures indeed

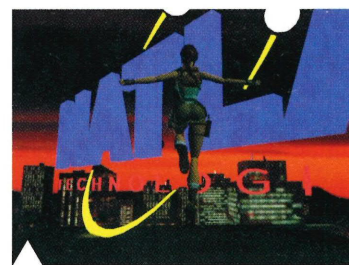


CROCODILE

Tricky to attack under water as weapons are useless. On the ground they're fast but can be killed surprisingly quickly



The entrance to the first tomb. This is also the loading screen for the first level. It looks dark in there



Part of the full motion video sequence between the first two stages

Tomb Raider

► now and again you come across a dead end and can go no further. This is where some backtracking and seemingly fruitless leaps of faith are required. Obviously there's somewhere to go or something you've missed, but it can become massively frustrating. This is why it will either be loved or hated.

You are awarded a standard pair of pistols which can't be lost but can be upgraded to a shotgun found along the way as you search every corner. It wouldn't be an action adventure game if it didn't contain pick-ups such as medi packs, ammo and the like. These aren't in great supply however, so it's best to use them wisely.

Along the way you meet other people who will help or hinder your progress, usually the latter. It's down to you how you take the information, which is offered during full motion video cut sequences between stages.

There are four levels in total, containing three main areas as well as sub-locations and secret areas. This may not sound like much, but once you submerge yourself into this world there's no going back. The levels are absolutely huge and can't be completed in a hurry.

The first three levels require you to collect the pieces of the Scion and in the final level you must discover the whole story about why you're there. It's not solely to locate the Scion – you must uncover the whole story for the game to be completed.

As you would expect with a game of this depth, saving is of great importance. This is done by reaching a save game point in the form of crystals. Clicking on the crystals brings up the save game option and you are given the opportunity to save at this point or carry on.

The points are distributed at key places and I

wouldn't advise saving your game until you've actually progressed since the last save ie. located an item or killed an enemy. Other save points are offered at the completion of a stage or level.

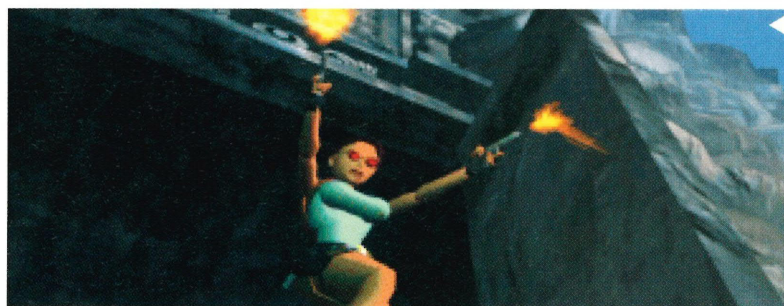
The main gripe about Tomb Raider is that some of the camera angles aren't helpful in any respect and just show a knee of Lara or don't reveal the end of a platform.

To counter this, view the area by using the L1 button in conjunction with the direction you wish to look. You can then view the area from top to bottom and left to right. Realistically however, to

look behind, you must first turn and face in that direction.

This works surprisingly well and rather than being a little extra to bump up the perceived value, it's actually an important addition to help discover hidden caverns or passages as well as checking for enemies and platforms. Without the inclusion of a map you must get to know the areas like the back of your hand

Although I'm not convinced the game has a 100 hour life span, it will clearly take an extremely long time to complete through hours of trial and error.



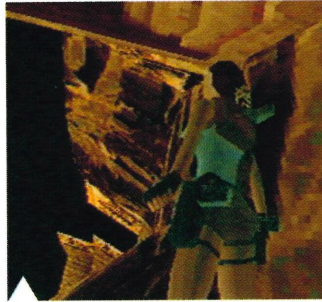
Lara is someone who really shouldn't be crossed. She's quick, nimble and, much more important, armed



Ascending a building on a length of wire isn't for everyone but it's quicker than taking the stairs



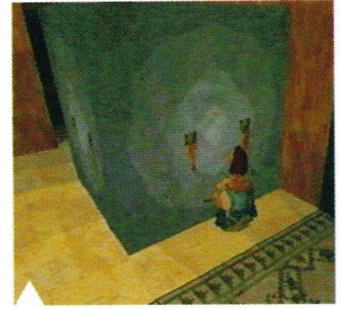
The second tomb is obviously much more of a challenge than the first in every department



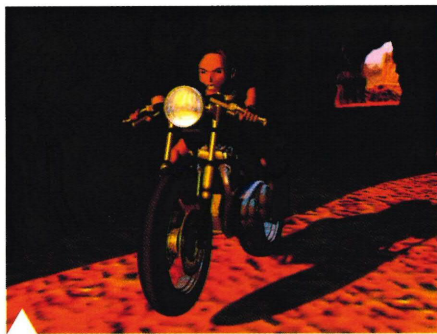
Leaps of faith are required from time to time as some jumps will look impossible at first glance



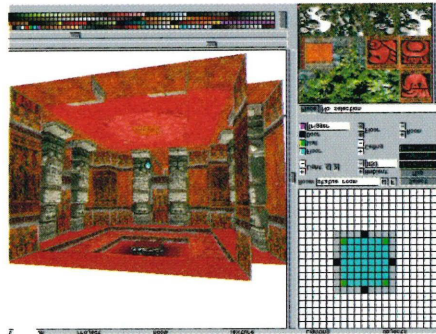
The puzzles are more and more difficult as you progress and some precision timing will be needed



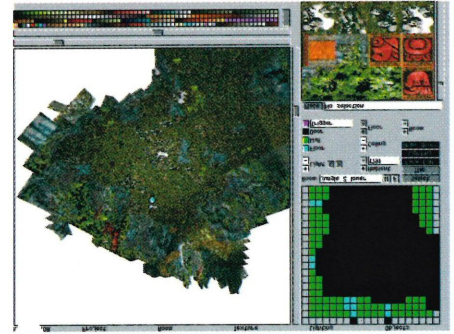
These enormous concrete blocks can be pushed or pulled to reveal hidden secrets



Not only is Lara pretty handy with a shotgun she can ride a bike at frightening speeds



A development shot giving an idea as to how the 3D tombs and buildings were created

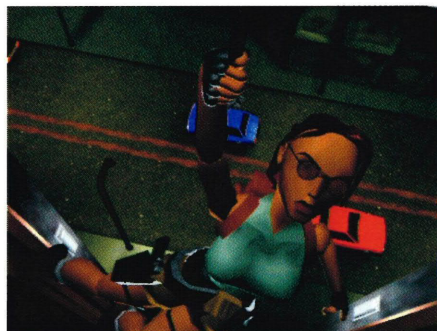


The unique room editor in action, created to speed up the level design

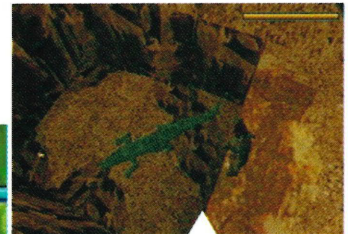
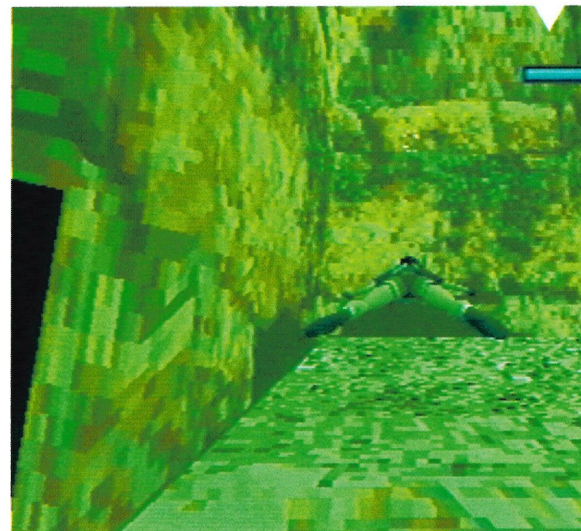
And there will be plenty of error. Tomb Raider is arguably the most testing game seen yet on the PlayStation, in all departments.

From the outset you will be forced to use your wits and skill to complete the many puzzles, blast enemies and safely escape the areas. And this is by no means as simple as it may sound.

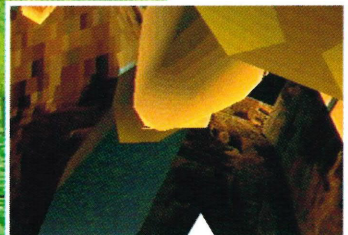
Everything gets progressively more difficult as you'd expect and sometimes it seems just a little too much so. The best advice here is to stick at it. All of this makes it an absolute dream, the likes of which we don't see too often.



The impressive breast stroke view offered underwater is hardly flattering to the character but as far as aesthetics go it's not too bad a view at all



A croc below is just begging to be handbags



This ridiculous view is Lara's thigh. Handy

PRO SCORE

GAME Tomb Raider
CONTACT 01332 297797

GENRE Action Adventure
RELEASE DATE November

SOFTWARE HOUSE Core Design
PRICE £44.99

GRAPHICS 9
SOUND 9
GAMEPLAY 9
LASTABILITY 9

The boundaries of the PlayStation are being tested more frequently, with some quite stunning results. Tomb Raider tests both the PlayStation and the player to the limit. It's big, bold, scary and taxing. An all round winner, from the graphics to the gameplay to the sound and back again. It's tough going but anybody who fancies a fresh challenge to take you where you've never been before will want to enter this strange new world. You won't be disappointed. That's a promise.

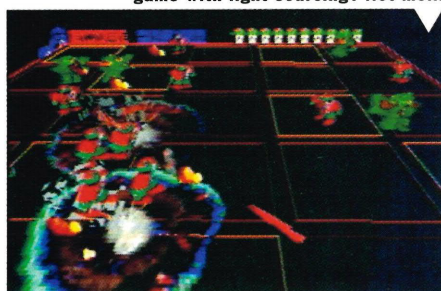
9
OVERALL
OUTTA 10

STEVE I haven't exactly played it to death but from what I've seen I'd certainly like to give it a proper go
JAY A multi-tasking, addictive and thrilling romp that puts the likes of Resident Evil firmly in the shade
ALEX A direct competitor to Virgin's Resident Evil and in many ways better
DAN Frustrating watching Andy play it. Give me a go for God's sake. I can do it better!

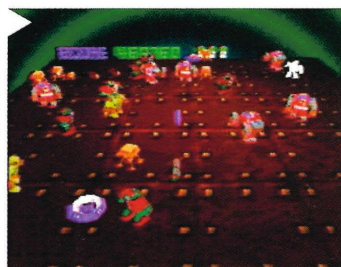
Robotron X

A warning to sufferers of photo-sensitive epilepsy – give this one a wide berth. It's more callous than the Killing Game Show, trickier than Tron and more ahem... smashing than Smash TV

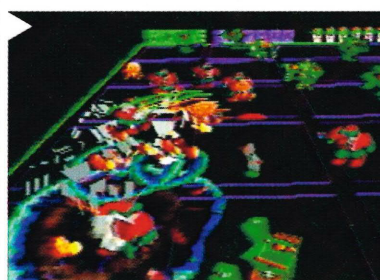
Who'd have thought, back in 1982, that in 1996 we'd see a Robotron game with light sourcing? Not me...



Each 20 wave section has a different floor covering



Early on in the game, the best tactic is to run around the perimeter, shooting inside and behind you as you go



The first, true next generation update of a classic arcade shoot'em-up is with us. When I was 15 I had a paper round – bear with me – this has great relevance to the review, I assure you. In the paper shop were four video machines. One was Defender, one was Pleiads, one Millipede and the other Dig Dug (I think). I put my first ever week's wages with my pocket money to buy a ticket to see Spandau Ballet at Whitley Bay Ice Rink. The following week Robotron 2084 replaced Dig Dug. The second time I got paid I put my entire wages into the Robotron machine. And the third time. And the fourth.

The only reason I didn't put all my wages into it on the fifth week was because I had become so good at it that each 10p lasted about half an hour and I was often the last person in the shop at closing time. The newsagent turned the machine off mid-game on many occasions. I got my revenge, however, on Christmas Eve when, having already collected my tips and been paid for the week, I resigned. Fat frumpster newsagent was thus left to carry all the bulky festive supplements up



The grunts are so relentless that even when you've lost your last life one of them stamps on your belly

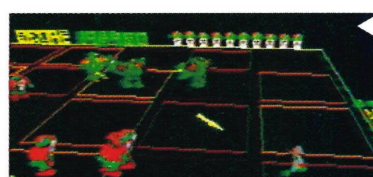
Strawberry Bank (the steepest slope in Sunderland) in the freezing cold himself.

1982 was a halcyon year for entertainment. Robotron arrived, Blade Runner came out at the pictures and Duran Duran dominated the charts. 1996, after a ropery start, promises to go out with a bang with A Time To Kill, Kula Shaker and the PlayStation birth of Robotron X.

GT Interactive has already pseudo-sated the appetites of old gamers like myself with its Arcade's Classic collection which features, with five others, the original Robotron and retails at a bargain £34.99. Unfortunately, the same price tag doesn't apply to Robotron X, but this is one of the select few PlayStation titles that just about gives value for money for its standard £44.99 RRP.

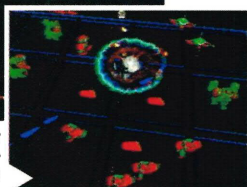
In 2084, man perfects the robotrons – a robot species so advanced that man is inferior to his own creation. Guided by their infallible logic, the robotrons conclude that the human race is inefficient, and therefore must be destroyed.

Trapped in a fiercely hostile square arena, feeling like Bruno facing Tyson, his Dad and his



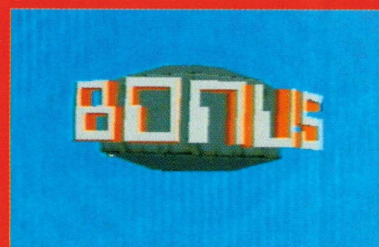
A simple wave of grunts and hulks only

Shoot a 'tron near you and it blows up – big time

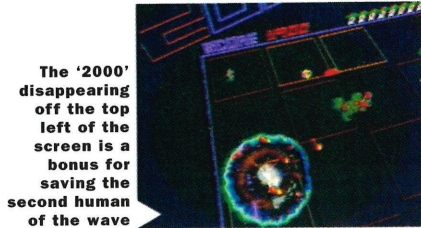


The Bonus Screen

At regular 20 wave intervals, you'll be treated to a bonus screen. This one features flowers and bees instead of nuts and bolts



Everything on this screen is out to destroy you. There are no humans left to save



The '2000' disappearing off the top left of the screen is a bonus for saving the second human of the wave

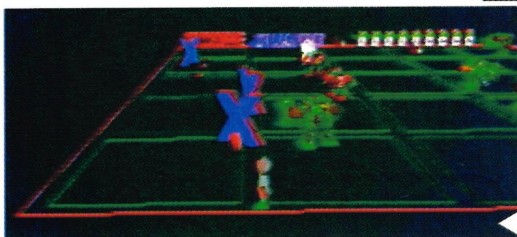


The three-way blaster's doing all sorts of damage here. The only problem is that it only lasts a few seconds

rock-hard big brother, you are mankind's last hope. Unlike big Frank, however, due to a genetic stroke of luck, you possess superhuman powers. Your mission is to stop the robotrons and save the last human family.

Deep within the laboratories lies your evil twin, the probotron. Driven by a crisp, unemotional logic, the probotron is responsible for the Brain, Grunt, Hulk and every other tool of human destruction. Have a look at the Electric Sheep Dreamers box for details of these – there's a game to review. Each wave sees you beamed down among all manner of aggressive androids. Everything on-screen is killable, but that's not the entire crux of the matter.

As mentioned earlier, the task is to rescue the last human family and this is done exactly in the same way as the original. Rather than mowing them down (as it happens, they're impervious to your bullets), the idea is to run into them, thus saving them from being blown away or crushed by the massed robotrons. If they die, it doesn't matter that much as looking after number one is ultimately far more important, but for each one you 'save', you ▶

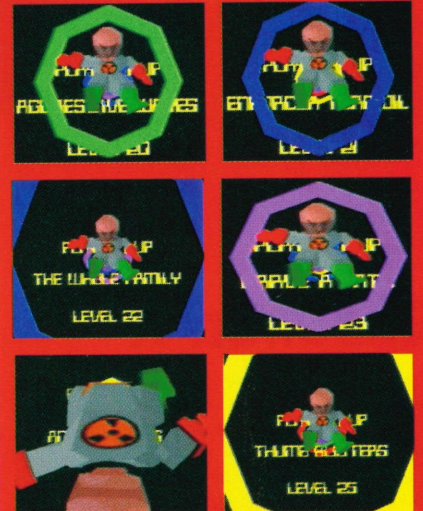


The '89850' is the current score, the line of white figures on the right is the number of lives remaining

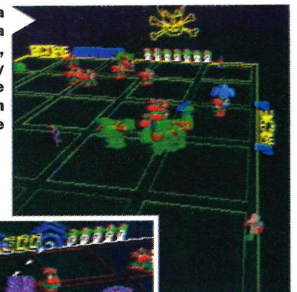
As it's called Robotron X, it seems only fair that the odd wave should be littered with the letter X

Level headed

Each level has an individual title with the same sequence of your character floating, Doctor Who/The Time Travellers style, through time and space

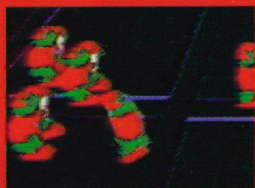


Whenever a human dies, a skull floats up, up and away signifying the sad loss of an innocent life

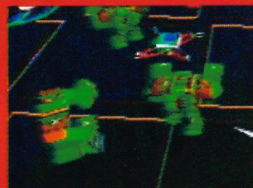


The brains are ranksters. Not only are they insidious, they take two shots to kill. Having said that, they lumber around and are pretty soft targets

Electric Sheep Dreamers



The Grunts are kamikaze robotrons. They are extremely stupid and appear in their droves on every wave. They move straight towards you at about one footstep per frame. They die if they collide with an electrode or a bullet



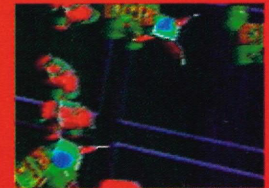
Hulks navigate a course by randomly picking a starting direction. If they collide with an object, they pick another random direction to walk in. They exist to kill humans, although they don't specifically chase them. It is merely a coincidence that some humans get run over



The Brain moves toward humans and yourself. They move toward the humans and randomly fire psion waves that move slightly faster than you. These weapons triangulate your position and approach periodically, zigzagging as a distraction



When dropped off, Tanks pick a random direction and start to zigzag. They fire off shells at a random speed in a random direction. If a shell hits the arena perimeter, it bounces and flies around until it hits you or disintegrates. If you are hit, the Tanks reappear

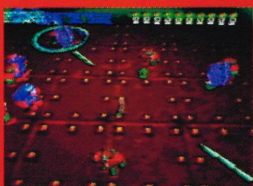


Enforcers hover around the playfield moving towards you. They fire shots at random intervals and random speeds. If a shot hits the arena wall, the bullet slides along it for a short period of time, before discharging. If a life is lost, quarks reappear instead

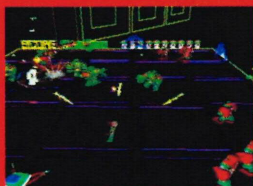
Eat plutonium death, suckers



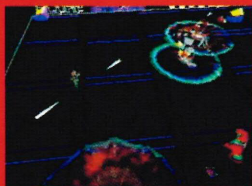
Not only does this power-up give you a shooter that sends out laser pulses three ways, it leaves a trail of mines behind you for robotrons to stumble on



The green blob near the professor (see 'Level headed' box for a close-up of the man in question) is a further power-up – probably temporary invulnerability



The wide-angled three-way is best used from the corners (not in the middle as seen here) as close in robotrons may slip in between the shots



The long range two-way is best used in the same way as the conventional single shot – the front beam picks off who you aim at, the rear one mops up the rest



If you fail to kill most of the robotrons on screen when you've got this beauty – the four-way blaster – you might as well give up and stick with adventure games

Robotron X

► get an incremental bonus which works in much the same way as capturing 'scared' ghosts in Pac Man.

On the first 'brain' stage, again reflecting the gameplay from the arcade machine, the humans can be turned into sinister mutants who then walk around, trance-like, in the good old horror movie zombie tradition – if you bump into one of them when they're in this state, it's curtains. So that's the score. Each wave has four humans to save – mum, dad, son and daughter and progressively more 'trons to annihilate.

Certain 'trons are indestructible and the grunts often re-materialise from the side of the play area, making your task even harder than the original bird's eye view 2-D splatter-fest. The new, improved 3-D angle neither adds to nor detracts from the gameplay of the original, although destroying solid-

looking metallic foes and peeling away into the perspectivised distance does give you a greater sense of both achievement and urgency as the camera angle smoothly swings around to keep pace with what is never anything less than frantic action.

What does make the next generation Robotron X a better game than its respected predecessor is the existence of bonus icons. These either give you greater firepower for a limited time, an extra life or limited invulnerability – portrayed by a spherical energy field around you. In the original it was a case of make do with what you've got and hope for the best. Now there's an added strategy element as having a three-way gun or picking up an extra life off the floor helps saving the world from a bunch of metallic morons that little bit more bearable.

As far as gameplay goes, that's about it and although software houses often go on about the modern gamer wanting more out of a game I tend to disagree. It's not as if a full motion video intro

would have made Space Invaders any better.

Regardless of flashy 3D, light sourcing, fractal landscapes and motion capture, all video games are, by nature, ultimately repetitive, so it would be wrong to criticise Robotron too harshly for this reason alone. A feature that particularly impressed me was the option to start playing at any level – from the piss-easy level one to the almost impossible level 200. The difficulty level, number of lives and number of points scored for each extra man are configurable.

GT deserves praise for sticking its neck out by not only releasing a retro package, but by then following it up with an updated retro classic. It'll make your eyes bleed (and your ears, if you turn one of the 19 thumping techno soundtracks up to eleven) and you'll be a quivering wreck for days on end if you play Robotron X for more than half an hour. And believe me, you will, but this time there'll be no sweaty newsagent pulling the plug.



With the three way/mine dropper in hand, your task's made so much easier

The icon towards the bottom right is an extra man. It's actually the same as the original game's main sprite



Currently invulnerable, the prof confidently picks off a few trumpet-wielding 'trons



Thumb blisters? I'll say. What about the bleeding eyes and ears?

PRO SCORE

GAME Robotron X
CONTACT 0171-285 3791

GENRE Shoot'em-up
RELEASE DATE Out now

SOFTWARE HOUSE GT Interactive
PRICE £44.99

GRAPHICS 7

SOUND 8

GAMEPLAY 7

LASTABILITY 8

Robotron X pays homage to the original arcade game, not by making it 3-D, adding light sourcing to the explosions and littering power-ups all over. It sticks to the frantic gameplay principles of Robotron 2084, retains the 'saveable' human family and not only evokes memories of your highest score being the most important thing in your life but shows that if retro games are updated with as much love and devotion as this then they can be worthy purchases in their own right. A bit linear, but I for one'll never tire of shooting robots.

7 1/2
OVERALL OUTTA 10

STEVE Far too difficult for my sluggish reflexes to cope with I'm afraid. Doesn't look much good either

JAY Put it this way, I wouldn't leave Buxton for it, although I'd have a go if I thought no-one was looking

ANDY If it's gameplay you're after it doesn't get much more intense than this. Not a classic though

DAN Harmless old skool fun, but is it really worth the asking price?

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Street Racer

The long-awaited 32-bit version of the 16-bit best seller has finally left the pit lane, but will it earn its next generation laurels?



With the release of Street Racer in time for Christmas, the ghost of the Super Nintendo Entertainment System has finally been exorcised. Donkey Kong Country's ozone layer has burst, Street Fighter II has been sequelled into oblivion and Pilotwings' flaps have finally flipped. Mario Kart and battered SNESs everywhere can only now be lovingly lifted into the loft. Street Racer (SR) for the PlayStation takes us back a good four years to when the likes of 'realism racers' Need For Speed, Ridge Racer and Formula One were no more than preliminary sketches and Mario Kart ruled the racing roost. That's not to say that SR can be accused of using a retro graphic style because it doesn't – any race game that can boast 60 frames of animation per second (most PlayStation racers run at between 27 and 30)

can stand up on the podium and be counted. What SR does is remind us all that one of the greatest game playing experiences is the multi-player challenge – particularly when software is as daft, hilarious and entertaining as this.

Ubisoft, never a publisher to throw out piles of software working on the law of averages that one game will surely be a hit, is entering the PlayStation fray for the second time. Rayman was the first official third party offering and remains one of the biggest sellers for the simple reason that it's such a polished piece of software. So what's Street Racer all about, then?

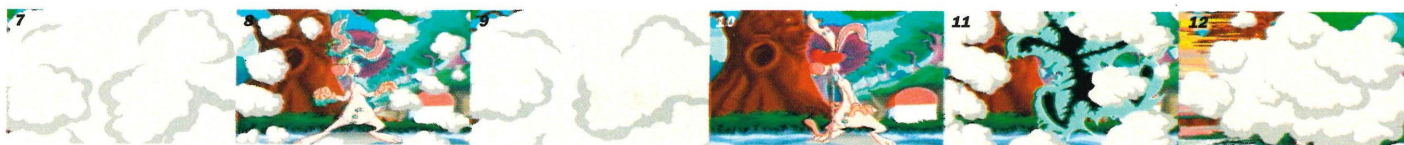
Elements of the original SNES and Mega Drive release – also called Street Racer – remain. The eight cartoon characters and their cars are ostensibly the same. Each driver has his own preferred tracks and special attacks and most of all, there's the multi-player option and this time the ante's been upped to eight. It has to be said however, that although SR offers this unique selling point in terms of the racing genre, it's in single and two player mode that SR really succeeds.

The four-player mode, in which the screen is split battenburg cake style, is just about playable but

Run rabbit, run rabbit – The diary of an unlucky bunny



1. Look 'round the tree for potential fun **2.** Step out into the road – something sounds exciting **3.** Where's that noise coming from? **4.** Cough, splutter... **5.** This calls for me to pull my head right into my neck **6.** Now I feel all dizzy – as if a car has sped past



7. This can't be any good for the ozone layer **8.** I'm feeling dazed and confused **9.** I'm gonna have to get out of the way of these exhaust fumes **10.** Check it! Semi-naked bird approaching! **11.** That was electric... **12.** She came and went too quickly



13. Flippin' heck, I'm swaying around like a good 'un now **14.** It's official. My lungs have burst **15.** Perhaps if I close my eyes, nothing else'll happen **16.** Can't resist peeping **17.** Oh my God, that's dynamite, isn't it? **18.** Yes, you furry bast (reader's voice)



having couple of split screen two player contests is much more satisfying. Eight player, on the other hand, is nothing more than a gimmick. The screen looks like a chequered flag, you can't see more than about a pixel in front of you, you need two multi-taps to play, and, with respect, what's the chances of eight people all actually wanting to play Street Racer at the same time?

An oft-heard criticism of most games these days is there's either no multi-player option or if there is, the single player game is too easy. SR doesn't fall foul of this – I've already mentioned the two player option is decent enough. The one player game, on the other hand, is as good as any of the more high-profile PlayStation racers and there are several reasons for this.

Firstly, the artificial intelligence of the CPU drivers is set at just about the right level. Revving away from the starting line in the Bronze Cup, I found that I could consistently finish second after only two or three races but it was difficult to get past the leader. The first two Bronze Cups I attempted I ended up a frustrating second, although I then won it and then the Silver cup at the first attempt.

What's noticeable about the CPU drivers is ►



Points of view

Clockwise from top left – low behind driver, Micro Mode, high behind driver, overhead



Eight Driving Greats



BIFF
If anyone crosses my path, I'll baseball bat 'em across the swede. No 'ard feelings, like



FRANK
I can fly like a bat, me, and scare other drivers with me spooky ghost attack. It's well scary



HELMUT
Ich bin not a great threat until mein auto transforms into a WW1 style biplane



HODJA
Whenever I want to overtake someone, I make them levitate like a magic carpet



RAPH
Come anywhere near me and I'll toot my horn so loud your eardrums will bleed



SUMO
Honourable Sumo can bitch slap cars off the road, leaving him free to gorge on flied lice



SURF
Hi, guys! Wanna get whipped by my towel? If not, I'll bulge my wheels like beachballs



SUZULU
Jive my ass and I'll throw an elephant onto your car, thus slowing it down considerably

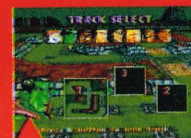


Hodja's tracks are the most creative ones graphically, although the layouts are among the simpler ones in Street Racer

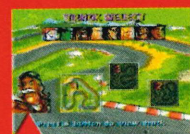
Tracks Of My Tears



BIFF
These are an awkward follow-the-arrows fest. One wrong turning and it's curtains



FRANK
All the bolt-necked one's spooky courses have shortcuts – use these or lose valuable seconds



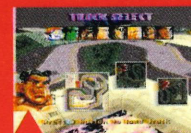
HELMUT
Classic Grand Prix layouts. The only thing is, it's always freezing and Christmas trees litter most corners



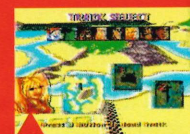
HODJA
Full of Eastern promise, with touches of Aztec and Egyptian architecture and a Kula Shaker-style soundtrack



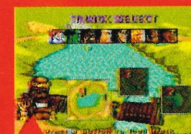
RAPH
A lively jaunt through narrow country lanes. Opportunities for overtaking are few and far between



SUMO
Set in Neo-Tokyo and reminiscent of the SNES race game F-Zero's tracks, these are the fastest in Street Racer



SURF
Pushing up on the joypad helps you over the many annoying stretches of sea water



SUZULU
Dusty desert circular tracks. Spindly trees block the route, patches of balding grass slow you down



Hodja gets an elephant on the head. Unlucky

Both these drivers are about to blow up

Street Racer

► they give as good as they get and once you're in a battle for the leadership, it's a case of applying tactics (namely your special attacks – see box marked 'Starting Line-up'), knowing when to use the turbo and picking the right racing line to squeeze past.

When you win a race, you're stuck in last place on the grid – the inverse to the real-life Grand Prix state of affairs. It's never easy, therefore, to completely dominate a race as the scrap through the back markers can be a bitch of a battle.

As expected each car's specs are different but more importantly, so are the drivers' special moves. Handling, grip, top speed and acceleration are how the cars are categorised, but the characters' attacks are what sets them apart from each other. The original SNES SR suffered criticism because no two characters were similar and there could never be a 'fair' two player game. This has been addressed for the PlayStation release and it's now possible for up to eight players to choose the same character – the only difference being the colour.

The podium protagonists

It took me three goes to win the Bronze Cup, but curiously only one to take silver. As far as I'm concerned, Surf's the best all-round driver. And she's got the best set of pixels



The phrase 'winning isn't everything' can be applied to SR. Not in the strictest sense, because winning is, of course, everything but it's possible to amass more points than cars placed above you by accruing bonuses. There's a one point bonus for every driver you lap, for collecting the most stars, for causing the most damage to the other drivers and for the fastest lap. This system adds to the excitement as it can alter the nature of the leader

board dramatically. Once a cup's been won, there's an animated cut scene of a rabbit trying to cross the road with 'hilarious' consequences. The sequence is the same after the bronze cup (six races), the silver cup (ten) and the gold cup (a gruelling fifteen). Once you've won the gold cup, the rabbit becomes available to drive in the Platinum cup – a better incentive than just a further cut scene which many games' finales consist of.



The cars all have the unfeasible ability to jump several feet into the air, allowing you to dodge speed sapping hazards

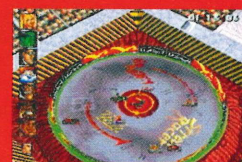
Collect the most stars in any one round and you'll get an extra championship point



Surf lashes out with what appears to be a towel, sending her nearest rival spinning off the track



The rumble mode is playable from four angles, but is dull in all of them



PRO SCORE

GAME Street Racer
CONTACT 0181 944 9000

GENRE Racing
RELEASE DATE December

SOFTWARE HOUSE Ubisoft
PRICE £44.99

GRAPHICS 7

SOUND 8

GAMEPLAY 8

LASTABILITY 8

Everyone can compete on equal footing, the single player mode has the AI set at the right level, there are plenty of courses and, in the hidden character, an incentive to do well. The (flat) background scenery rotates smoothly although the cars suffer from glitching when a lot are bunched up. The action is a little too frantic at times, making the special attacks too random. Although there are plenty of modes, options and configurable elements it still doesn't hold a headlamp to RRR, Wipeout & Motor Toon 2 – it's not fast enough.

8
OVERALL OUTTA 10

STEVE Only played it in two player mode and that's a rare treat. Eight players may get a bit silly though

JAY Forget the 16bit visuals because underneath the fairly simplistic makeup lies a reasonably thrilling game

ANDY The four player game is a blast although it's a tad bland as a single player affair

DAN Grab a mate and get stuck in! Multi-player racing action never felt so good! Looks bad but plays well

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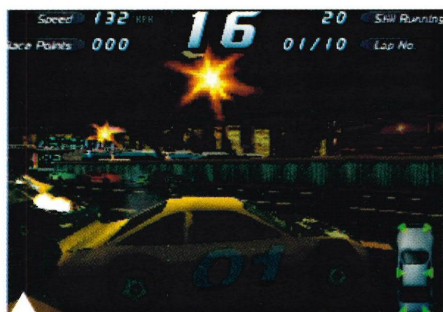
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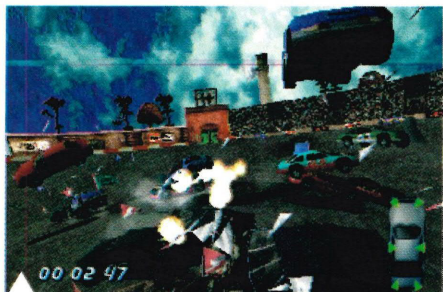
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Destruction Derby 2

The surest way of releasing your road rage without being 'done' has spawned a sequel. You need nerves of steel, disregard for other road users, a heavy right foot and stunt man prowess



Driving at night time can be fun, but make sure you watch out for drunken pedestrians



Chitty Chitty Bang Bang? No, it's just one of the more acrobatic drivers from the bowl rounds

In my book, driving ranks high as one of the most stressful things I have to endure. Almost everytime I get behind the wheel it's guaranteed some crackpot will either cut me up, weave all over the road, pull over without indicating or just pull out in front of me and then proceed to cruise along at a steady 5mph. Frustrating is not the word. I give 'em a blast on the horn or shout obscenities, but I'm always wishing I had the power to remove them from the road, whether it be by ramming their vehicle into a nearby ditch or by blasting them with some high powered weapon. Unfortunately, that sort of thing only happens in the movies. Or certain parts of Salford.

Road rage is an ugly thing that's constantly present on almost every road in the country. Certain people (not me, oh no) take the law into their own hands and stupid things do happen. People get hurt, and on certain occasions, people get killed. It's bad news, but everyone who has to drive a car can relate to getting pissed off with the old dear in front doing an average of 13mph, and who bizarrely always has some kind of easter bonnet sat on the back parcel shelf. So, how do you combat this problem of stress-out road users and in-vehicle angst? Well, thanks to Psygnosis and developers Reflections, there is now a solution - and Destruction Derby 2 is its name.

In this new re-generated version, you now get the

chance to ram everybody off the road, cause pile-ups, create explosions, indulge in breath taking crashes and generally bomb about in your motor like you've never have before - and get away with it! You can race and wreck, just race, or just wreck - the choice is up to you, but either way you're gonna end up in a knackered car with a big grin slapped across your face and not a worry in the world about 'due care and attention' or the officers of the local constabulary. Escapism, you can't beat it can you?

But of course, most of the hardened PlayStation owners will have seen all this before. "It's the same old game innit? Surely it's just the original with a couple of new bits?!" Well, actually, no, it's not. DD2 is a completely reworked affair, a bit like Psygnosis' treatment of wipEout2097 if you ask me. Yes, the old game is in there, but all the dodgy bits have been removed and replaced with bright new shiny ones that dazzle in the mid-day sun. Bigger, better, bolder, brasher and numerous other superlatives starting with B, Destruction Derby 2 is a new and improved beast of a game. Hear it roar!

The action has been turned up a notch in this new and improved version. When it boiled down to it, the original racing sections were pretty pump in the old game and the only reason most people bothered digging it out of the toy box was for the short-lived laugh-a-minute Total Destruction bowl bouts - Twenty cars all after your blood resulting in



One careful owner



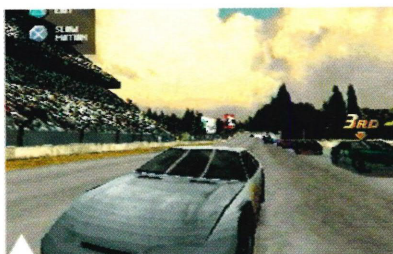
As with the first DD game, you have three selectable vehicles to choose from; Rookie, Intermediate and Pro. Each one differs in acceleration, top speed and road grip, so make sure you pick the one best suited to your driving talents.

a no-holds-barred frantic race for your life with polygons flying about all over the place - which was definitely the best bit of the original if you ask me. Well, you'll be pleased to know the Total Destruction bowl has survived. In fact, there's now four of them and they're even more fun than before.

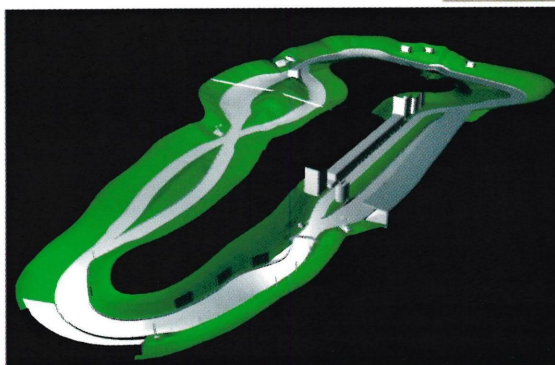
Due to the fact that the cars now roll and flip as well as spin (the only crash feature in the original), the bowl sections are now more frantic and generally a great deal more fun to play. Particular bowl circuits have mini-jumps built into them which if hit from the correct angle, result in your car flying several feet skywards, twirling like a ballerina in mid-air. Landing after one of these nanosecond flights of fancy can prove equally hilarious - just take advantage of the built-in replay option if you don't believe me.

Straight forward Stock Car Racing is another section to be put under the microscope. The tracks are now not only wider - leaving you more room for escaping a pile-up or to turn your vehicle round - but they're also a great deal longer, throwing up hairpin bends, banked corners and random jump ramps throughout each race. Of course, these new obstacles cause more accidents during race time and make for some entertaining, if not gravity-defying crashes. Which, in this game at least, isn't necessarily a bad thing.

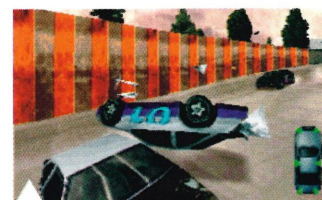
Audio wise, DD2 has been stripped of its



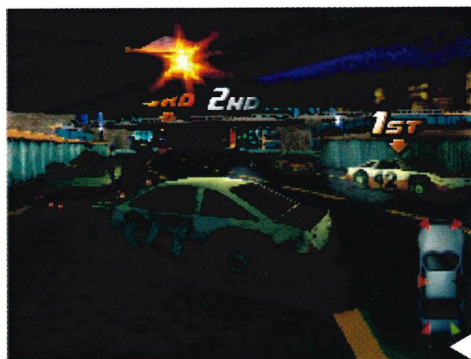
Extreme close-up! Yes, DD2 even has an in-built action replay facility allowing you to view your performance



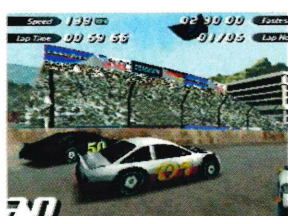
We're all raring and ready for the off here on the starting grid. Watch for the green and then go, go, go!



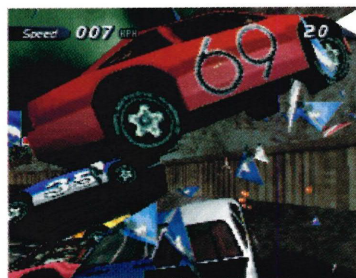
Flipping 'eck! Top speed collisions will mean you'll be spending a short while on your roof



What a pile-up! Enter one of the four bowls and you can expect plenty of in-yr-face pixel action

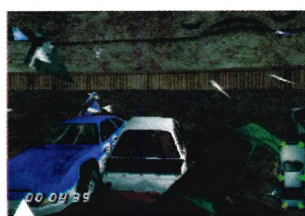


Try and ram opponents into the barriers to gain valuable checkered flag positioning



Tunnel vision? Try and stay in the middle of the track. That way, you'll miss most of the bad crashes

Avoid getting trapped at the bottom of a serious pile-up as your escape route may be a dangerous one



Side swiping other vehicles is an important part of bowl driving. To gain points you must get involved

Decisions, decisions...

There are three different racing modes to pick from. Here's a bit more information about each one.



Wreckin' Racing
You need to complete a certain number of laps on each different circuit. On the way, points are awarded for damaging the other cars on the tracks. Stock Car Racing



You don't get any points for crashing into anyone in this mode of play, it's simply a foot-down race to the finish line.



Destruction Derby
Pick one of the four selectable bowl circuits and race around smashing hell out of everyone in it. Top stuff. Last man standing is the winner.

Start your engines!

After deciding in which mode to play, the next decision is picking which type of race you'd like. Of which there are four...



CHAMPIONSHIP

Once the race mode has been selected, you can enter the Championship where the tracks are automatically selected. Wreckin' Racing is a five race battle, where the last race is a Destruction Derby contest. Stock Car

Racing only has four races though.

There are four different leagues of drivers to race against with points awarded for winning and if Wreckin' Racing mode is selected, you'll also get points for damaging the other cars. The point system for both Destruction Derby and Wreckin' Racing modes are as follows:

Wreck an opponents' car 25 points

Spin an opponents' car through 360° 50 points

Spin an opponents' car through 180° 25 points

Spin an opponents' car through 90° 10 points

After all the races, your overall finishing position in the league will be displayed on-screen. If you get promoted a new track or a new bowl will become available. Fail and you'll have to go back and do it all over again.



PRACTICE

In order for you to get used to hammering around in the Championship races, Psygnosis has included this practice option. How nice of them



TIME TRIAL

Basically this is just a race against the clock. Record your fastest lap, challenge a friend and so on



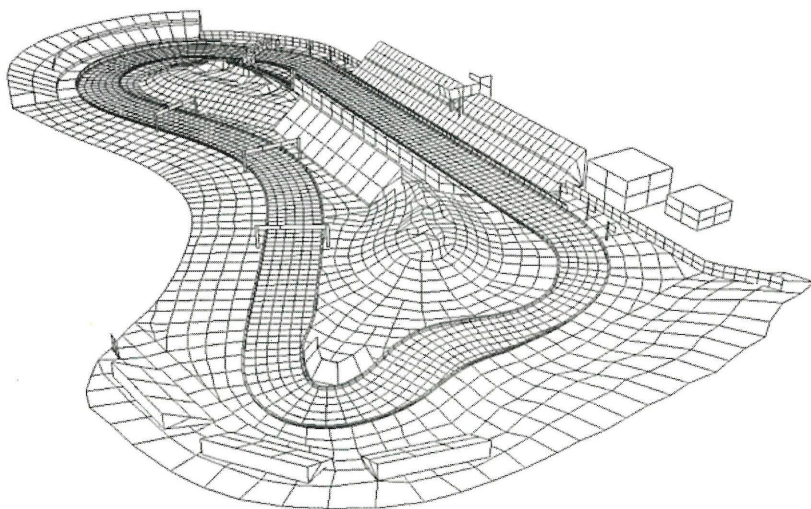
MULTIPLAYER

This type of race let's you and nine other pals play in a league against the rest of the DD crew. Each driver will be called up individually and asked to race and at the end of it all, the league tables will be shown so everyone can work out who emerged victorious

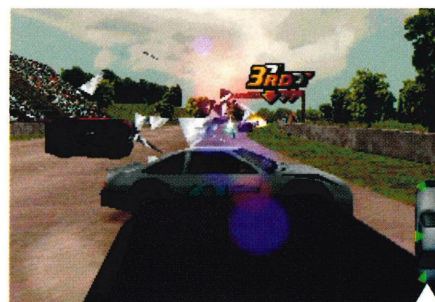
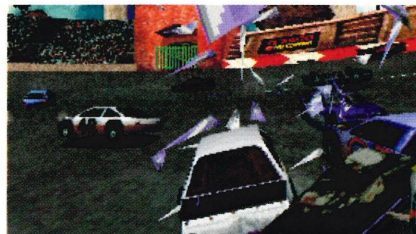
When in Toal Destruction, all the other cars will chase after you and you alone. Speed is the word here



Everyone hates you, your car's a right off and you're receiving more damage than you're dishing out. Sort it!



Head-on crashes result in plenty of flying glass, smoke, sparks and more often than not, explosions!



Crash, bang, wallop! The in-car viewing angle can prove a pain at times. Better stick with the outside one

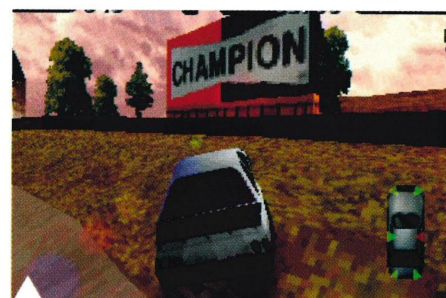
Check out all the funky lights man! City night life sure hots up when you're playing this game



Position the cameras wherever you want them and then sit back and watch your crazy driving



Smoke pouring out of your bonnet isn't always a good sign in driving. Hit the pits if you wanna continue



Going off-road and missing the race isn't gonna make you a winner. Get back on course and drive like the wind

Desruction Derby 2

► techno soundtrack and had it replaced by some serious thrash metal donated by a couple of Sepultura-wannabe bands, Jug and Tuscan. It certainly adds to the thrill of racing, but I won't be placing any bets on them being the Christmas number one. Running commentary has also been provided in DD2, this time by manic American sports bloke Paul Page. So when Paul's got his mic plugged in you can expect plenty of "Woaaaaah", "Go easy on the paintwork!" and several shouts of "Oh - my - God!" before you cross the finish line. Again, not necessarily a bad thing.

The one thing that's bugging me though is the value-for-money aspect of it all. Okay it's an entertaining title that thousands of gamers will love to death and there's been loads of changes made all adding to its overall appeal, but I think that the Destruction Derby name doesn't have enough impact anymore. I'm not knocking it, it's just the fact that when it originally arrived last year people were amazed and intrigued - and rightly so - but now that the original is considered old hat, will another version spark that same feeling with the

cash-waving gamers? Personally, I don't think it will.

It's a much easier game to get into now, the rewards of playing are a lot more accessible and the complete picture is one of a beefed-up stock car bonanza that, frankly, stands way above the original. But will owners of the first game want to spend another £45 on a game that's basically got all the things in that should have been in the one they've already forked out for? It's a difficult problem. The technology moves up a gear and over a period of mere months, so does the software, leaving the once awesome games looking tired and downright dodgy.

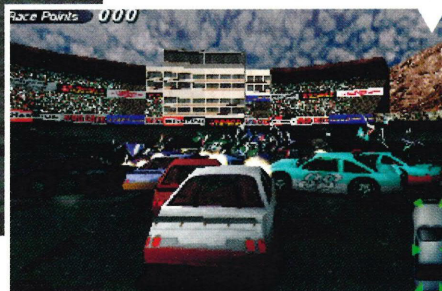
So what can you do? Nothing really, except either stick with your old version or update it to this. If you don't own DD1 however, then I thoroughly recommend you get yourself a copy of this as soon as possible. Like I say though, current DD1 players may not want to part with the cash again, despite this being a much user-friendly piece of software, but it's definitely a worthy Christmas purchase for any stock car virgins out there. The winter nights will fly by, believe me.



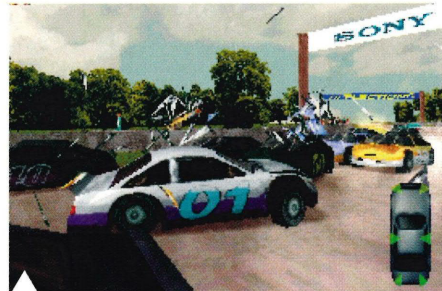
You don't want to be hitting that wall, or any other wall in the bowl circuits. Put your foot down and escape!



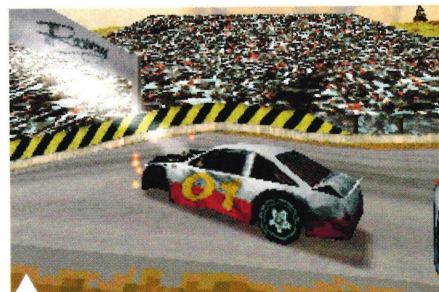
What out for the leaders by looking for the handy 1st, 2nd and 3rd icons. skidding off before you reach them won't help



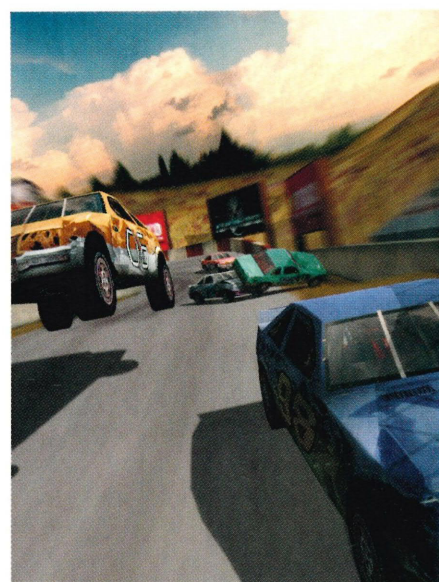
Ploughing your vehicle into stationary cars is enjoyable, but ultimately will lead to your own damage



Driving around the tracks the wrong way is a common occurrence in most car games. DD2 is no exception



Oh dear. Losing either of your front wheels will mean a stint in the pits for you and your motor



Pumpin' bumpers!

During either Stock Car or Wreckin' Racing modes, you're allowed to pull into the pits and repair damage to the car. There's a five second time limit in here and during Wreckin' Racing, only one pit stop is allowed per race.

During a Stock Car race, you can pull in as many times as you like, but the main concern should be about clocking good race times so it's not wise to keep pulling into the pits. Once you're in there, the car will automatically guide itself to the correct garage where the parts that want fixing can be selected for repair.

Highlight the areas of the car that need sorting and then hit the joystick to pump out the damage. The more you pump, the more damage is repaired. It's easy really. Once the five second limit is up, the car will automatically leave the pit area and rejoin the race.

PRO SCORE

GAME Destruction Derby 2
CONTACT 0151-282 3000

GENRE Racing
RELEASE DATE October

SOFTWARE HOUSE Psygnosis
PRICE £44.99

GRAPHICS 9
SOUND 8
GAMEPLAY 7
LASTABILITY 7

In the immortal words of my favourite recording artist Gary Barlow 'Everything changes but you'. A phrase perfectly suited for Destruction Derby 2 as many things have been improved gameplay wise, but in the end it all boils down to whether you want a better version of something you already own. The technology may have advanced, but has your bank balance? A sobering thought. Highly recommended for first time viewers though, but DD veterans may feel slightly cautious about buying it - again.

8
OVERALL
OUTTA 10

GAZ Definitely an improvement on the first attempt, lush graphics and collision detection are both improved

STEVE Why on earth's Gaz writing a comment? Surely he's the art assistant?

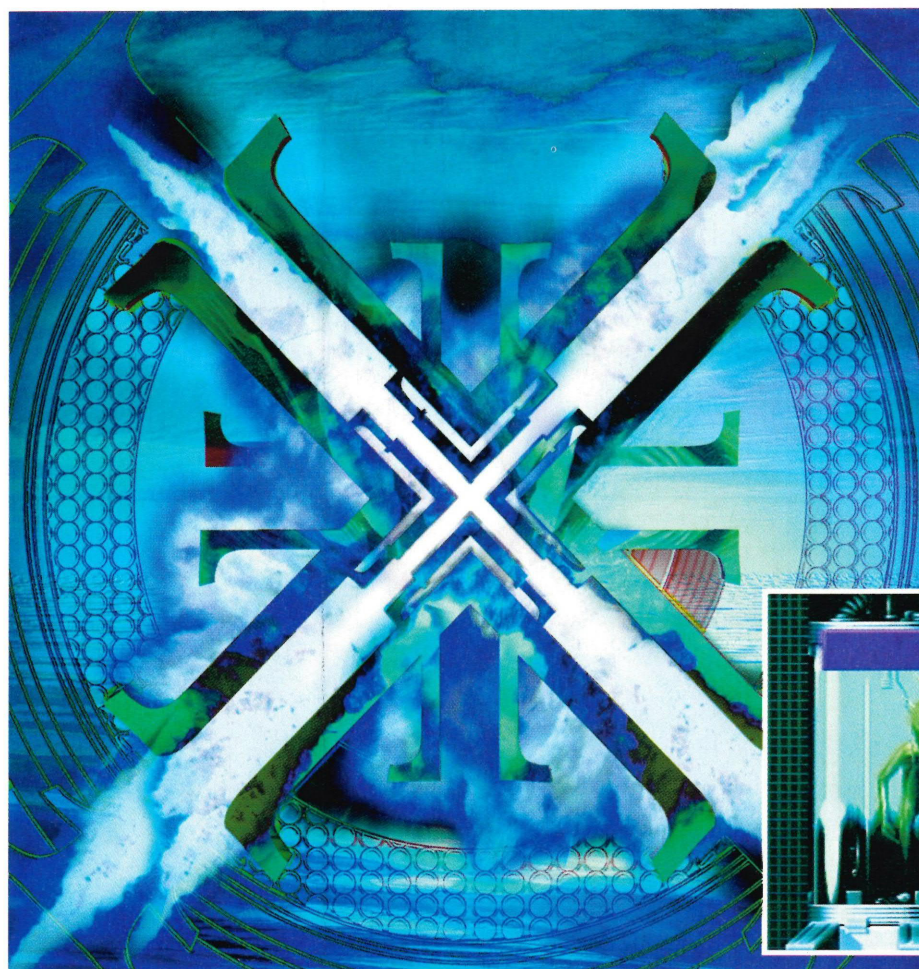
ANDY I've no idea, perhaps he's after a job on the writing side?

ALEX It's because there's only me, him and Fiona left in the office tonight, you lazy bunch of bastards

X-COM:

Terror from the Deep

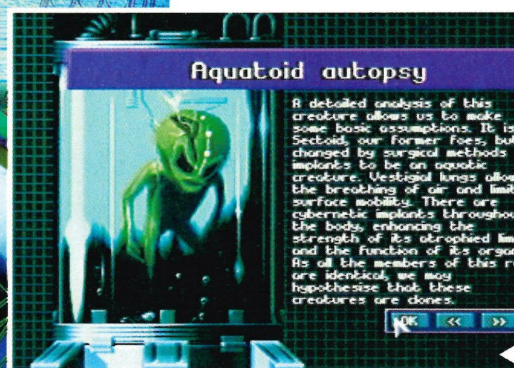
Those bug-eyed buggers are back – and this time they're doing Jack Cousteau impressions. Can the X-COM gang stop them again, or are we destined for a fishy grave?



And you thought it was all over. After voyaging to Mars to pummel the invading alien force in the First Alien War, things on Earth seemed to get back to normal. The ungrateful governments of the world disbanded the X-COM force, and got on with the business of having costly lunches at the taxpayer's expense.

Little did they know that the destruction of the Martian stronghold had activated an Earth-bound tachyon beam. Sending an early wake up call deep into the world's oceans, it stirred ancient and dormant ancestors of the extra-terrestrial race into violent action. A massive 400 billion tonne spacecraft, lying beneath the waves for millions of years began to disgorge a deadly new species. Shipping lanes were plagued with mysterious sinkings, remote ports were destroyed and planes plunged into the seas. As the powers that be realised the alien threat had returned, they re-formed X-COM and sat you, yes you, in the control seat. Reckon you're up to the job?

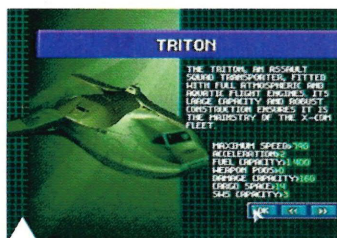
Well you'll soon find out. The first decision you have to make is where to situate your first floating



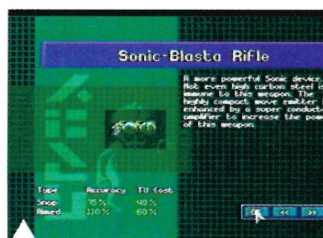
In true Spooky Mulder style, hacking up dead aliens will help you find their weaknesses



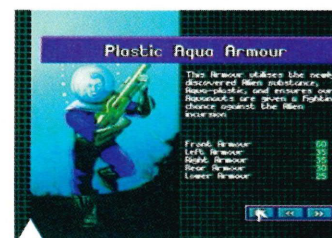
The variety of creatures ranged against you is mind boggling. And they get weirder and weirder



The UFOpedia allows you to call up all the info you've accumulated, on your weapons and the aliens

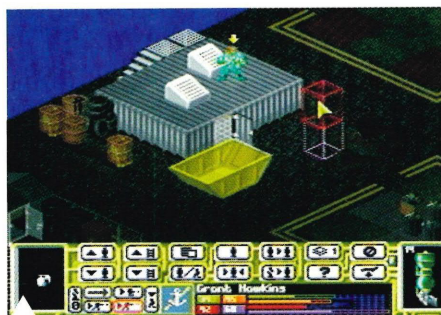


If you can get your scientists to replicate Aquatoid technology, you can fight fire with fire



If you get a bit sick of the aliens killing your troops with one shot, you'd better design some armour

Get your scientists to invent a motion tracker, and you'll spare your squad some nasty surprises



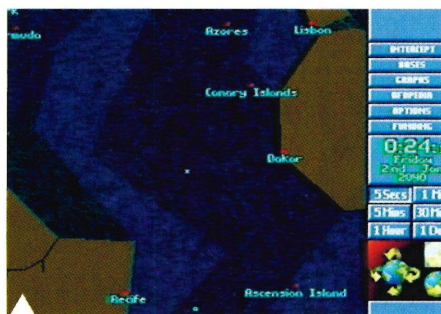
The addition of multi-level buildings adds another dimension to the combat sections



Hunting aliens on cruise ships requires you to search every level and every cabin



The tight corridors and open decks makes ship based combat a tricky challenge. They'll be packed to the gills with baddies too



Geoscape lets you zoom in on global trouble spots for a better look at the action. The white cross in the centre is a crashed alien sub

X-COM: Terror From The Deep

► distinctly different ETs to blast and dissect, each one offering new clues as to its weak spots. The longer you play, the more toys you get to use, the more involved the missions become and the more sleep you lose.

It really is a fantastic game, and one to which I could quite easily lose several months. As I'm sure the rest of the Pro team can testify, having become sick of seeing me play it for the past week. Once you get into the research and manufacturing, you'll start to make real progress, and once that happens you're addicted. There's always something new waiting to happen in the next turn. A new breed of alien to confront and dissect, a new gun to get to grips with, or a new type of mission that needs new tactics. Each play reveals more to do. As far as value for money goes, it's hard to fault this.

It can be frustrating when you take a carefully aimed shot at a dangerously close alien, only for your dozy Aquanaut to miss completely, and the

aliens have an uncanny knack for hurling high explosives directly into the middle of your squad as they leave the Triton. These are hardly bugs in the game, as they can be rectified by making better weapons and being more careful when you deploy your troops. It's still irritating as Hell, though. I'd also advise you to invest in a Playstation mouse and a memory card to get all the juicy goodness, although joypad control is easier than you might think.

Terror From The Deep is lucky, as it's pretty much alone in its field at the moment. The disappointing Warhammer (also reviewed this issue) has none of TTFD's scope and it shows. Especially after reviewing them both, I'm surprised to see that a strategy title can work this well on an essentially arcade based platform. If you're getting sick of derivative action titles and fancy something with a bit more lastability, then this is the game you've been waiting for. Love it.



After each mission you'll be given a breakdown. Dead aquanauts or civilians will cost you big points

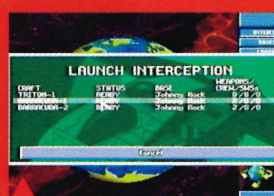
Use this screen to handle the affairs of each of your bases. Build new facilities, buy more weapons or give orders to your science and factory teams



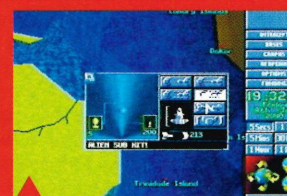
The Alien Bashing Activity Weekend



Your sonar picks up an alien flying submarine. The sneaky tinkers



Quickly launch a Barracuda attack craft, armed and ready to rumble



Decide which style of attack to use, and give them a right royal pasting



Now send a Triton sub, packed with rock hard aquanauts, to investigate the wreckage



Arm all your aquanauts to the teeth with tools of death, ready for the aggro ahead



Kick some alien arses and claim extra terrestrial artefacts for research



The basic bug-eyed alien is nothing compared to the later creatures



The intrepid aquanauts locate a crashed alien sub

The aliens often lurk behind underwater rock formations



That guy in grey hiding behind the skip is a civilian. Protect him at all costs

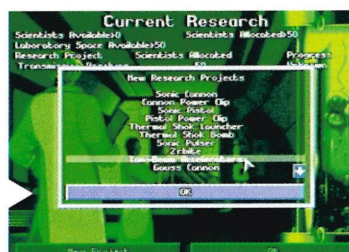
The alien's movements are hidden from view, unless one of your team can see them. Very tense stuff



Inside the downed sub, one of the aquanauts surprises a stranded alien. Eat plasma death, you green meanie



The more things you retrieve from successful missions, the more technology you can research



Stayin' Alive

Terror From The Deep can seem massively complicated and, on occasion, viciously hard. It's not as daunting as it seems though, especially if you heed these basic hints and tips. You know it makes sense.

Position your first base in the Atlantic, close to the US. They pay the majority of your funding, and you'll pick up plenty of alien activity to start you off

Recruit more scientists and technicians as soon as possible to speed up your development progress. Once you've cracked the alien technology, your weapons will improve no end

Build a Containment Pen early on to hold captive aliens. You can learn more from a living specimen than a corpse. Also, bigger living quarters are a must as you expand your teams

During combat missions, always have your team on opportunity fire to prevent aliens pouncing on them between moves

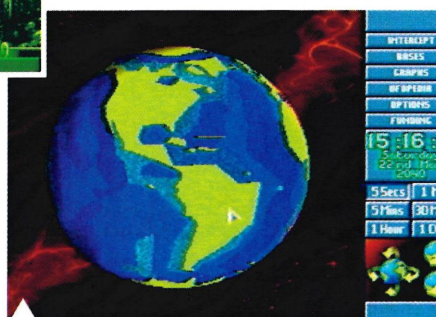
Take missions slowly but surely. The aliens are smarter than you think, and a methodical sweep clears them up easier than running about shooting all over the place

Equip your troops with an accurate gun in one hand and a grenade in the other. This way, they're prepared for anything without wasting time rummaging in their inventory

If the aliens launch a Terror Attack and you haven't got enough troops to beat them, just land a Triton and abort immediately. You'll lose points, but not as many as you would if you didn't respond at all

COMPETITION

So impressed were we with the throbbing sack of gaming goodness that is *X-COM: Terror From The Deep*, that we hung around outside Microprose's HQ and secretly waited for them to come out. Once they showed their blubbery faces, we thrashed them with pointed sticks until they started weeping and gave us some quality X-COM freebies to dish out. Thanks to our merciless pummeling, you can now be the happy owner of one of 5 copies of the original *UFO: Enemy Unknown* game, plus! Sweet Lord, plus! a sexually provocative X-COM T-shirt. The winners will surely be the most envied creatures on the planet, so simply tell us what year a UFO supposedly crashed in Roswell, New Mexico. Send your answers to our usual address, and we'll pass your addresses on to the CIA.



The Geoscape screen is where you keep an eye on the world's oceans. You can speed things up using the buttons on the right

PRO SCORE

GAME *X-COM: Terror from the Deep*
CONTACT 0990 998877

GENRE Strategy
RELEASE DATE Out Now

SOFTWARE HOUSE Microprose
PRICE £44.99

GRAPHICS 7
SOUND 7
GAMEPLAY 9
LASTABILITY 9

As more software houses realise that the Playstation is capable of more than just driving games and 3-D fistings, in depth games like this will hopefully become more common. True, the graphics are fairly basic but after a few hours of orientation you'll be hooked for months. Intelligent enemy tactics, loads of new weapons and resources to use and a constantly evolving challenge only add to the appeal. Yes, it takes a bit of effort to get into, but it's time well spent. Wild horses won't drag me away from this one.

9
OVERALL
OUTTA 10

STEVE Ooh I've certainly had time to spend hours playing this. Can't really say, looks alright I suppose
JAY X Philes will love it, as will those of you desperate for a spot of solid strategy-based fun
ANDY If you have more spare time than you know what to do with then this is the one for you
ALEX Given the amount of time Dan spent hogging this one, it must be good stuff

NHL '97

Ice hockey has already been brought successfully on to the PlayStation in the form of Sony's Faceoff. Now EA is attempting to go one better

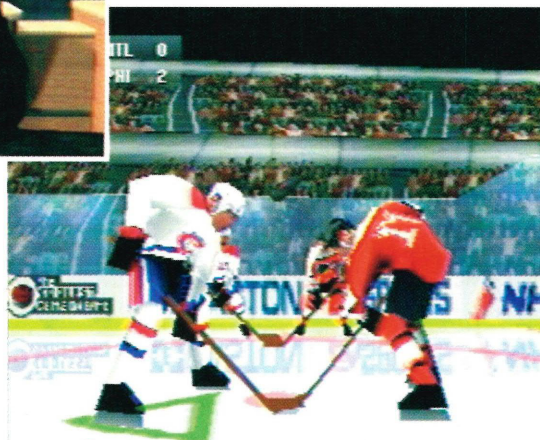


This has to be the freakiest hockey helmet ever seen. Rather than fight them off simply torch them with this dragon. That should definitely do the trick



Everybody make some noise. We're rushin' now. Pass the Vicks mate I'm on one. Big Time

GAME STATS	
Boston	Philadelphia
0	Score
0	Shots
0%	Shooting Percentage
0:00	Power Play
0	PP Goals
0	PP Shots
0	PP Goals
0:00	Breakaways



The camera zooms in for the faceoffs. Not always won but they can be the difference between winning or losing

The problem with the majority of sports sims is they come and they come with startling regularity. No sooner have we had the greatest, most playable and addictive football game ever than another game arrives claiming exactly the same.

Whether there's enough space for all these releases in the market is debatable and there's usually only a couple releases that stand out. This is hardly an issue for ice hockey you wouldn't think, but sure enough, here comes the third release in only a few months.

Electronic Arts is responsible for this latest effort which has already had astounding reviews for the PC version. This is an adaptation of the PC version but in terms of graphics, for once, the PlayStation version falls short.

As you'd expect there's every team from the North American Hockey League included, with vast amounts of stats and team line-ups. Since we already have NHL Faceoff which incorporates the same teams and players, owners of said game won't be needing to read on. The reason being both games are much the same.

EA sports games have generally been second to none but NHL '97 falls just short of equalling Faceoff. This isn't to say it's a failure but in terms of gameplay, Faceoff just pips it at the post. After all ice hockey is the fastest team sport in the world.

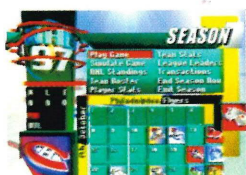
Faceoff is well ahead of the rest in terms of speed but NHL '97 isn't far off the mark. As far as gameplay is concerned, it's still very easy to pick up and play for anyone attempting it for the first time. A

When choosing a team it's best to take a look at their all round strength and standings before beginning a match



The teams line up for the game ahead. There will be plenty of bruising and lost teeth after this hard fought contest

The ice rink itself looks realistic. The players also skate realistically



This shows the rosters for a single month in the NHL for the Montreal Canadiens

Fights break out from time to time. It doesn't matter if you win or lose you'll still be penalised



little prior knowledge of the rules and regulations would be an advantage but if you don't fancy this you can switch all penalties off. You then won't be caught offside or have a player sent from the ice for hooking, charging or more drastically, fighting. For the true game however, you will need each and every option switched on.

Line changes can be the key to winning or losing games and these can be changed after any stop of play. Your attacking and defending lines can be edited before the match begins so if you think you can do better from your knowledge of the players, then you change them. And prosper or not as the case may be.

Also included are the usual array of game options such as the exhibition match, a full season, a single player game or two player game. So there's nothing new here then.

One thing included here that we all know plays a great part in ice hockey (one of the main reasons for watching for some) are the fights which break out. Now you have the chance to pummel the opponents to oblivion with just a small penalty to pay off the ice.

Graphically, it looks much the same as Faceoff apart from the face-offs themselves where the camera zooms in close to reveal some large sprites. Once the face-off is executed however, it zooms out again showing the big picture to make things more convenient for playing.

Before a match there's an EA Sports commentator talking you through the game's

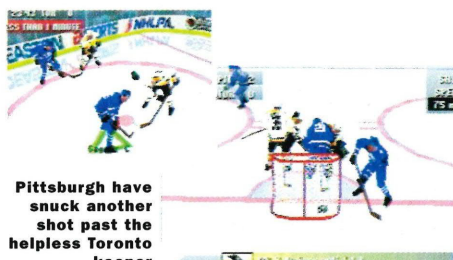
prospects, then there's the ringside commentator between the periods and after the match itself. Unfortunately they say pretty much the same stuff during all different games with different teams and set-ups.

The sounds are as realistic as you can get with the sounds of blades on the ice and grunts as the players hit each other at speed, not to mention the sounds of the sticks slamming the puck across the ice. The main gripe however is the lack of atmosphere in terms of crowd noise. Even the cheesy Hammond organ tunes sound muffled for some reason. These are only minor gripes which don't detract from the gameplay itself, but surely they could have been improved for authenticity.

Maybe the rise in popularity for ice hockey in the UK is the reason for the succession of releases we've seen over the past few months. The problem with ice hockey and various other sports sims is they're all much the same. None of the ice hockey games are particularly bad, this stands above Virgin's NHLPA but a little way off Sony's own NHL Faceoff.

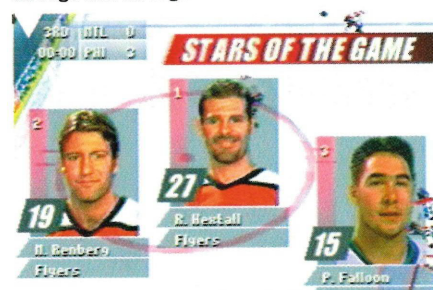
With all the skill levels, stats, play options and team rosters it's as complete as they come but if you already have Faceoff, this would be a pointless purchase. It's definitely worth a closer look if you fancy trying out an ice hockey game or simply want to know what the attraction is. You may be surprised at how well this super quick and popular sport converts onto the PlayStation compared with others.

All teams are included and are represented by their own true logos and colours both home and away



Pittsburgh have snuck another shot past the helpless Toronto keeper

Mug shots of the main players in the game just played. Nice chaps through and through



Who's been a naughty boy then? A Philadelphia player is sent off the ice in shame

Goal area scrambles are a frequent sight in any ice hockey match



There's three offensive line changes, two power play offensive and defensive lines

PRO SCORE

GAME NHL 97
CONTACT 01753 549447

GENRE Sports sim
RELEASE DATE December

SOFTWARE HOUSE Electronic Arts
PRICE £44.99

GRAPHICS 8
SOUND 7
GAMEPLAY 9
LASTABILITY 8

All ice hockey games are reasonably playable, fast and more instantly addictive than football games or tennis sims but their longevity isn't assured. A single player game is best in league mode to give you some sort of goal to reach as you try to progress to the playoffs and ultimately win. A two player game is always a far greater prospect in any sports sim and this is no exception. Graphically and in terms of sound effects, it's a success but the lack of atmosphere makes you feel you're just going through the motions after a while.

8
OVERALL OUTTA 10

STEVE I prefer this out of the three on offer, but then I've always been a bit of an EA Sports fan

JAY Plods along as a fairly cool little hockey sim and should thrill the puck fans accordingly

DAN Sports games don't really float my 'boat', but this is OK thanks to some nice scrapping

ALEX Playable, quick, contains scenes of gratuitous violence, but doesn't re-write the Ice Hockey genre

Disruptor

A mind is a terrible thing to waste, as you'll find out in Interplay's Playstation entry into the genre we know and love as 'Doom clone'

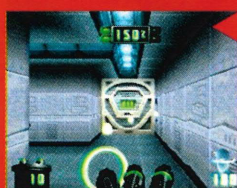
Disruptor's Used Gun Emporium



18mm Auto: Yer basic machine gun. Invaluable at first, but you'll soon discover its limitations as the enemy get bigger and meaner



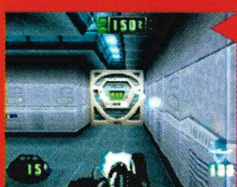
Phase Rifle: This is much more powerful than the Auto. It will make mincemeat of medium sized baddies in a few shots. Handy until something else turns up



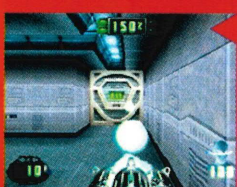
Phase Repeater: Exactly the same as the Phase Rifle, but it fires in three directions at once, thanks to its unique triple pronged design. Destructive



Lock-On Cannon: Slow to reload, but the heat-seeking projectiles make it ideal for sorting out problems around corners. Ammo is scarce, naturally



AM Blaster: Fire at long range and you'll get a paltry scatter effect, but hold down fire, get in close and release for point blank destruct-o-fun



AM Cyclone: Only comes on at the end, but it's worth the wait. Point it at a room full of scumbags, hit the trigger and hey presto! Instant BBQ

It is the future. And we all know what that means. Spaceships, ray guns and pants made from tinfoil. I saw The Jetsons, I know the score. George Jetson and his sci-fi brood made it quite clear that mankind will colonise the entire solar system, with small happy outposts of humans nestling on planets and floating about in special 'space houses'.

What he neglected to mention, the cheeky animated bugger, was that the future isn't quite as comical as his exploits suggested. Yes, there are people living in space colonies, but things aren't as rosy as we've been led to believe.

To patrol these colonies in times of crisis, and keep them safe in the harsh outreaches of space, the United Earth has formed the Lightstormer troops. Teleported willy nilly all over space, they are the shiny suited equivalent of the SAS, called in when things go awry on other planets.

Armed to the teeth with state-of-the-art weapons, they have an added advantage. They're all psychic. Not psychic like that addled old duffer Mystic Meg ('It will be someone with feet, eyes and maybe hands') but psychic thanks to Steve Austin-style psionic implants. These cunning devices boost latent powers to vicious levels, allowing the Uri Geller-esque soldiers to blast opponents with mind power, heal themselves and drain energy from the bad guys. Let's face it, this is marginally more useful than bending spoons.

You start the game as a raw recruit, the ruggedly named Jack Curtis, and the first few levels reflect

your lowly status. Rather than being thrown headlong into vicious firefights, you'll start out with fairly simple training exercises which steadily increase in difficulty until you're ready for real combat.

These early levels serve a double purpose, as they also introduce you to the psionic powers, one at a time. To begin with you might find some of these training levels a bit tough, but go back to them after you've tried some of the real missions and you'll soon realise how gentle they were.

Anyway, once you've been decreed hard enough to cope with real life duffing up, you'll be sent all over the cosmos to clear up trouble spots. Yes, missions will take you from the arid deserts of Mars to secret Antarctic bases overrun with mutants and there's even a level set within your own mind. And, obviously, all the while you're busy shooting things.

Also, neatly bookending each level are some video clips showing your progress through the ranks of the Lightstormers. As well as looking like a shoddy version of Babylon 5, these sections contain vital tips for the next mission, as well as a developing storyline that only really starts to make sense after about eight levels. Oh yes, there's intrigue afoot in the United Earth. And by the time you reach the end of the game, you'll know exactly who's behind it.

But Disruptor isn't as simple as its venerable heritage suggests. Whereas Doom requires you to fling as much ammo as possible about the place,



Graphically the levels and enemies change so often it's difficult to get bored with your surroundings

Big trouble lurks ahead. Luckily there's plenty of ammo for some serious disruption





These RoboCop lookalikes really are a pain. One shot into that pod on the left and it will attack. Otherwise it will leave you well alone



causing widespread gut-loss, Disruptor is a different kettle of gun-wielding fish altogether.

For a start, the ammo on offer is stingy. If you peg it through the levels, firing from the hip, you'll run out just when you need it most. This means having to adopt a new style of play – sneaking round corners and taking the bogeymen out using the minimum number of bullets. Not only does this make you think about what you're doing, it also introduces an element of strategy.

On top of this hit-and-run game style, the presence of psionics adds a new layer to Disruptor's violence sandwich. They're not there just in case you feel like using them. If you don't figure out when to use psi-blasts and when to use straight forward bloodshed you're stuffed after about level four. You also need to learn how best to keep your psi-energy topped up, and which implant to use to best effect.

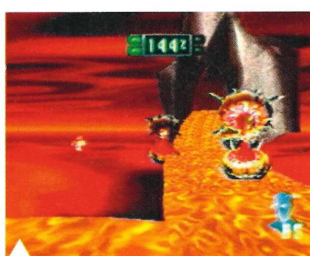
Ultimately though, there's not much that can be said that hasn't been said about other games. Disruptor is a functional entry into an overstuffed genre which looks fairly mundane compared to Doom's sprawling levels.

The main levels are fairly straightforward, with very little exploring to do, and there are no secret rooms or levels to speak of. If this had the size and scope of Final Doom, it'd be a winner. But it doesn't, so it's only really worth looking out for if you fancy a less violent version of the world's favourite bloodfest. Which sort of defeats the object really.

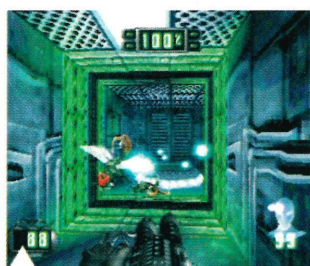


More of these video sequences we've come to know and love

The action comes in bursts. You may be safe for a while but then you're dropped right in it

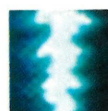


More strange scenarios are afoot. Quite how you will deal with the dangers ahead is up to you



The AM Blaster really is the work horse gun

Simple Psi Man



SHOCK:

This sends beams of mind energy sweeping out in front of you, toasting anyone in the near vicinity. It's got a limited range but is incredibly powerful. You start the game with this baby, and it costs five psi points to use



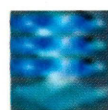
DRAIN:

Zap a bad guy with this and it'll sap his energy. Shoot at the same time to speed up the process, and you'll be left with some floating balls of energy. Pick 'em up and you'll replenish psi power. Only uses up one psi point as well



HEAL:

If you've taken a real battering, and there's no medi-packs in sight, use this as a last resort. Using up a hefty 20 psi points, it tops up your health with a stingy amount. Even so, it could be the difference between life and death



SHIELD:

Handy if you're surrounded by beasties, this will guard you from harm for a brief time. Not long enough to make you invincible, but enough to be of use. Fifteen psi points is the not unreasonable asking price



BLAST:

Similar to Drain, this will finish off the enemy a whole lot quicker. It demolishes them straight away rather than killing them slowly, but you have to be a good shot to avoid wasting time and energy



TERA-BLAST:

The psionic equivalent of a nuclear bomb. This basically pulverises everything in a meltdown of psychic power, using 25 psi points in the process. You'll have to reach the end of the game to see it in action though



The enemies have such a varied attack you must learn exactly which weapon is most effective against what

PRO SCORE

GAME Disruptor
CONTACT 01628 423666

GENRE Shoot'em-up
RELEASE DATE Out Now

SOFTWARE HOUSE Interplay
PRICE £44.99

GRAPHICS 9

SOUND 9

GAMEPLAY 8

LASTABILITY 7

With the majestic might of Final Doom and Alien Trilogy already on the market, Disruptor's got a struggle on its hands to gain recognition against such famous competition. It deserves to do well though, as it's beautifully programmed, smooth and sexy all the way through and the variety of weapons and psionics will keep your attention. The only downside is that, while the levels might be varied and challenging, there are only 13 of them. This is worth considering, but it lacks the oomph needed to make it essential.

8
OVERALL
OUTTA 10

STEVE Usually Doom clones don't go down too well with me but bizarrely I quite enjoyed this one

JAY Weird cut sequences, mind boggling collectable weapons and a big dollop of 3D violence. Top stuff

ANDY Not the most enormous game in terms of levels but there's enough here to keep you amused

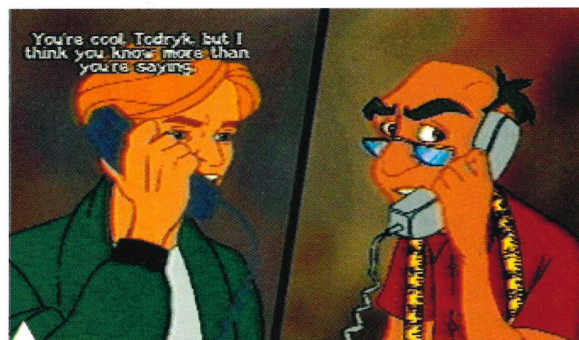
ALEX Better than most Doom clones because you can see where you're going most of the time

Broken Sword

Point-and-click adventures in the traditional mould have been few and far between on the PlayStation, the average Discworld being the best of a pretty poor bunch. Not any more though

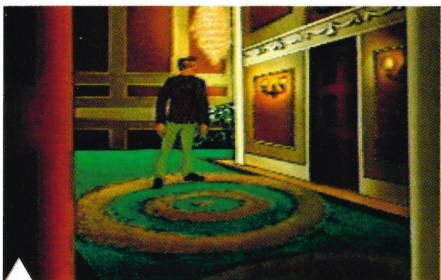
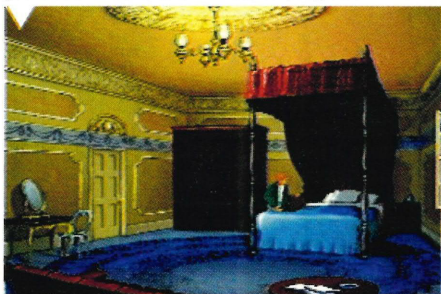


A head for heights is needed on many occasions. Thankfully it doesn't seem to bother George that much



It's obvious the tailor's lying. He knows the name you need, if only you could find a way to make him talk

Clues aren't easy to find in Broken Sword and you need to take a few risks to progress



You're in trouble now. If this chap catches you in his hotel room you're dead for sure!



Good job you can hide in the wardrobe. Disaster strikes though, he's coming this way

Broken Sword is one of the most engrossing adventures I've ever played. Rich in storyline and featuring some of the most impressive cartoon animation seen outside a Disney studio, this game can't fail to impress. And it's hardly surprising.

Developer Revolution Software cut its teeth on classic titles such as Lure of the Temptress and Beneath a Steel Sky and in doing so won many devoted fans along the way. The appeal lay in the gritty realism that always seemed to be lurking just beneath a pleasant surface. This made such a refreshing change from the likes of the excellent but annoyingly 'nice' stories that made their way out of the LucasArts camp at the time.

Broken Sword continues the trend. All wrapped up in a neat package of comedy, historical intrigue and even gentle xenophobia (very much in the harmless 'Allo 'Allo style before you get all outraged) it is essentially a story of terrorism and brutal murder. Don't fret, there's nothing too graphic to upset the more timid among you.

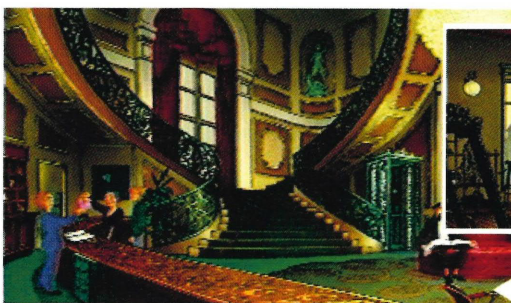
The plot centres around George Stobard, an American travelling around Europe. He gets involved

in the intrigue when, while innocently sitting outside a cafe in Paris, he gets caught up in the blast seemingly from a terrorist explosion. Of course, being an American, he feels the need to stick his nose in where it's not wanted and decides to find the killer himself.

The story takes you around Europe visiting various countries as the trail leading to the killer twists and turns. The plot thickens and new elements are constantly brought in. Just when you think you're going along the right lines, another character or aspect is introduced to the puzzle leaving you scratching your head and wondering where this new piece fits in.

There are many aspects of Broken Sword worthy of praise, not just the story. Graphically the game looks impressive enough on a still picture but the animation makes everything seem all the more real. It's said that the team responsible for this is the same crew that produces the cult comic Tank Girl, but why this would be impressive is beyond me because of course, the comic isn't animated. But never mind.

Another name which means nothing to me



The game's 'love interest' is Nicole, a photo journalist from the local rag

The Hotel Ubu's receptionist is a real 'jobsworth' type but can be cajoled by the right person

The perfect crime?

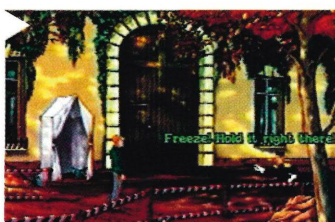


1. Storm clouds are gathering 2. But Paris in spring is a lovely place 3. Especially for an American with time on his hands... 4. Time to just watch the world go by 5. Plenty of street entertainment 6. Must be time for his tea break I guess. He's earned one



7. Wait! My Spidey sense is tingling 8. What is he up to? 9. Whatever it is he's not waiting to see the results! 10. What the... 11. Maybe this'll teach us Americans not to fund terrorism abroad! 12. No one blows up George Stobbard and gets away with it!

Oh great. Not only have I just been blown up by a clown I'm getting arrested for it now as well



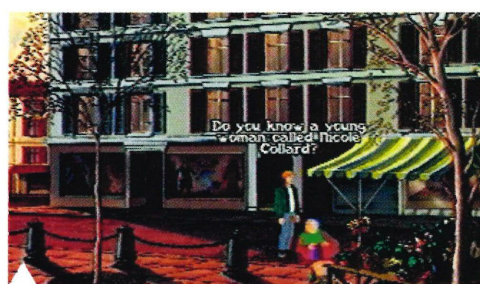
personally but is sure to impress somebody is Barrington Pheloung. Barrington who? If I were to say 'haunting themes' of Inspector Morse and Truly, Madly, Deeply you'd know what I meant wouldn't you? Old Barrington's solely responsible for composing the entire score that backs the game and very good it is too (if you like all that classical type nonsense that is). Told you you'd be impressed.

This isn't just music streamed off the CD. Oh no, this is fully reactive to whatever is happening on screen. It builds the atmosphere up to levels of almost unbearable tension when something exciting is happening, then eases back when you're stuck so as not to be too 'in your face'. Amazingly it can even be quite soothing at times and help you to think.

It still surprises me how often the musical score of a game is ignored and it just goes to show the games industry still has a lot of growing up to do. I mean, can you imagine going to the cinema and sitting down to watch the latest big release only for the music from Floating Runner to come blaring out of the speakers. It just wouldn't happen and that's because the film industry realises what a key ingredient music is, especially when it comes to setting a scene. And the sooner more games companies come to terms with this, the better.

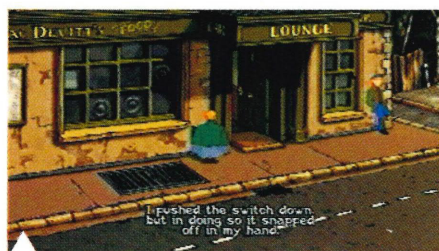
Another vital ingredient that must be right, especially in an adventure game is the dialogue, both in terms of the way it's written and the way it's presented. There's no point breaking the bank to hire a well known voice if the lines they are reading sound like they have been scripted by a seven year old. Revolution countered this problem by recruiting one of the BBC's top scriptwriter/editors to write the dialogue for each of the characters.

This creates the impression that Broken Sword ►

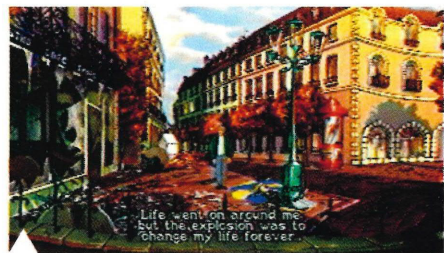


George's libido takes over at times, especially when Nicole comes into the picture

Remind me again. Why did I get involved in all this business? I could have just left it alone, but no...



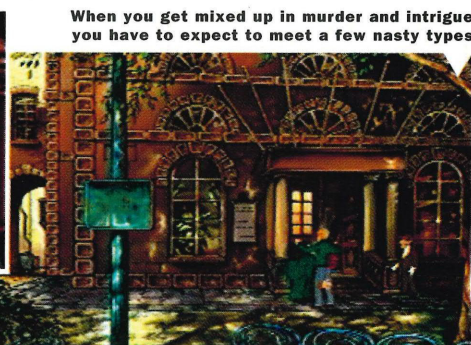
Oops. Maybe if I jam it back in place no one will ever notice that I broke it



Yeah, explosions tend to do that to you. Can be really inconvenient sometimes

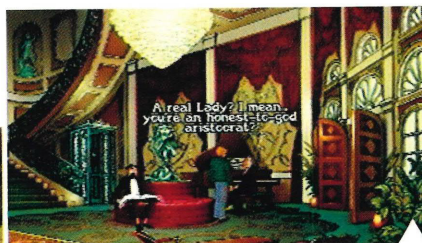


It'd probably be better if I owned up about the switch thing. After all, they do say honesty's the best policy



When you get mixed up in murder and intrigue you have to expect to meet a few nasty types

Climbing the haystack poses a lot of problems. You'll need to do a number of things to get inside



Lady Piermont is surprisingly helpful for a toff. Still, let's face it, she's got nothing better to do

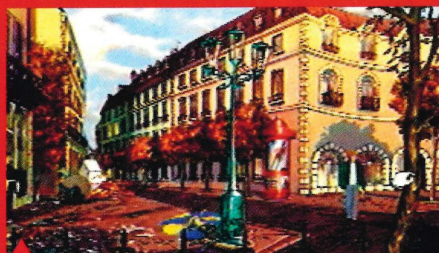
Broken Sword

► is a thoroughly professional production from the bottom up. Even parts of the game which are normally stuck in at the last minute have had some serious time spent on them and the extra effort shows.

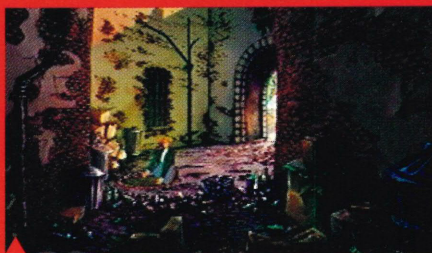
Surprisingly Revolution has resisted the temptation to bring in some big guns to provide the voices. Normally this means weakly delivered dialogue which can at times spoil your enjoyment, but not in this case. The actors involved have, without exception, put in top performances (although admittedly at times they do tend to ham it up a bit too much in the name of comedy, the Clouseau-esque French policeman being a notable case in point).

One thing did irritate me greatly at times though. The script, even though very well written and acted out, is at times a little too long. Rather a lot of time is spent listening to what people have to say rather than actually solving puzzles or progressing through the storyline. To be totally

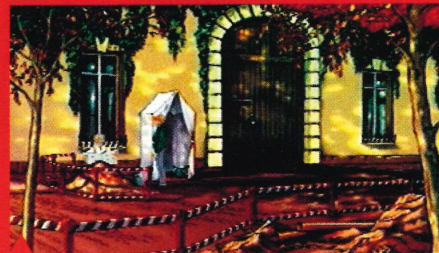
Hot Pursuit



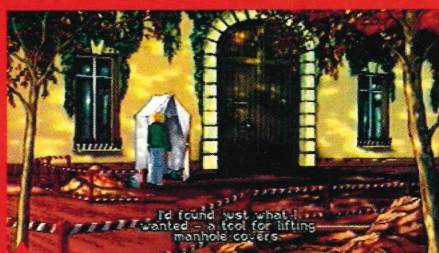
1 The trail's still just about warm. If you get your thinking cap on straight away, there could well be vital clues just waiting to be found. Maybe he scarpered off down that alley. Best have a look



2 That manhole leading down into the sewers would probably make a handy escape route wouldn't you say? The trouble is, there's no way to lift the cover without the right equipment



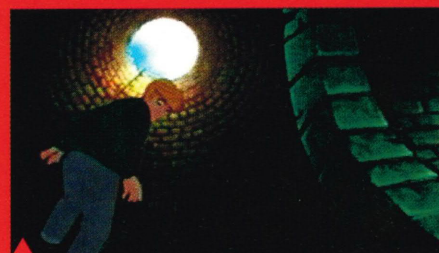
3 The workman's toolbox looks promising. If only you could get inside. Some sort of distraction is necessary I think, maybe that newspaper you picked up off the floor would do the trick



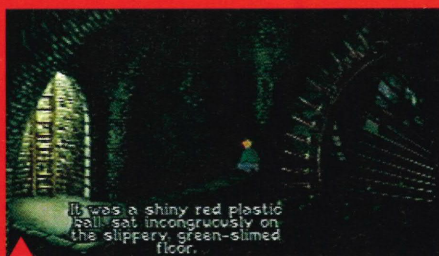
4 Right, he's done one at last so he can put a bet on, effectively giving you free reign to rummage among his tools. Success! As expected you've found the perfect item for the job



5 You could be forgiven for having an uneasy feeling in your stomach at this point. After all you're about to climb into a dank, smelly sewer which could be hiding a murderous clown!



7 Is this such a good idea? Surely you'd be better off putting the whole incident behind you and carrying on with your holiday? I mean, why get involved, it's none of your business really is it?



8 Your bravery is already yielding rewards though. Just mere feet away from the bottom of the ladder is the killer clown's discarded red nose! What a stroke of luck!



9 You couldn't have hoped for this in your wildest dreams. The bomber obviously came this way and dropped a tissue before snagging his jacket on the railings leaving behind a piece of cloth



10 Your elation doesn't last long. Just as soon as you pop your head out into the fresh air you're in trouble again. Be creative with the truth though and you should be just about okay

honest, this is the only reason Broken Sword's overall mark has suffered slightly.

This is only a small point and is a niggle that you probably won't experience until you come to play the game through for a second time (as I had to do to take the screenshots). You'll be too wrapped up in the storyline to get bored.

I suppose it's about time I mentioned the game's crowning glory. The problems that you have to overcome are all entirely logical to solve and this is where it scores highly over something like Discworld.

You can always think through a puzzle and work out what the solution is as long as you have all the necessary items in your inventory. This makes Broken Sword a treat to play because there's an element of intelligence required rather than just blindly relying on pure luck and trial and error.

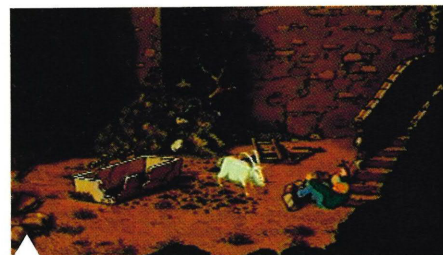
This is undoubtedly the definitive game of its genre on the PlayStation so far and other companies have got some way to go to catch up. With Discworld 2 looming large and promising vast improvements over the original and everyone hopeful that Lucas Arts will convert stuff like Full

Throttle and Monkey Island III over to the PlayStation, it may not be long until there is some serious competition.

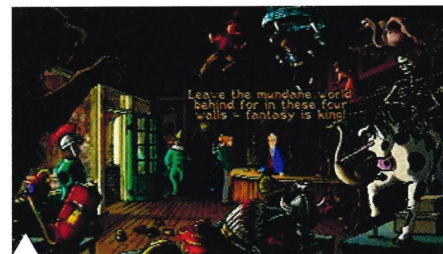
If it wasn't for the minor excessive dialogue niggle I mentioned earlier, and the fact that you really do need to invest in a mouse to get the best out of it, this would have got a nine without a doubt.

Surprisingly it's not exactly unplayable using the joypad, it just makes the experience a little more laborious and even slightly more difficult because it's that little bit harder to find those all important hot areas of each particular scene.

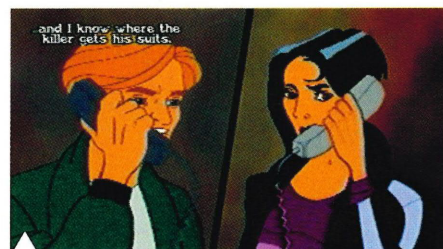
Using the mouse makes everything run that little bit more smoothly, and makes it easier to become totally embroiled in the storyline simply because you don't have to worry about getting to grips with the control method. Don't let this put you off if you haven't got access to a mouse though. Like they say what you don't have you don't miss and this review of Broken Sword has been done with the fact that most people don't have one in mind, and this has been reflected accordingly in the final score. The best adventure on the PlayStation by a mile, and shouldn't be missed by fans at any cost.



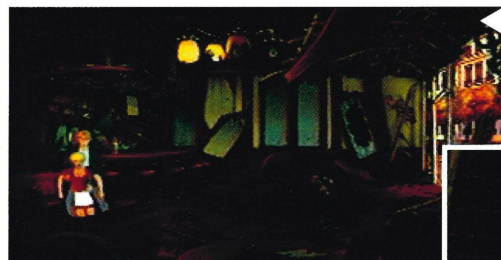
That's a nasty tumble. You don't want to be taking many knocks like that. Perhaps you can trap it some way...



The costumer has some vital information for you. The name of the killer. If only you could get past his sales talk you'd be away

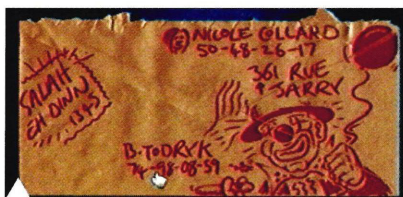


You'll have to do better than that if you want to impress Nicole. After all, she's a hardened journalist looking for a scoop

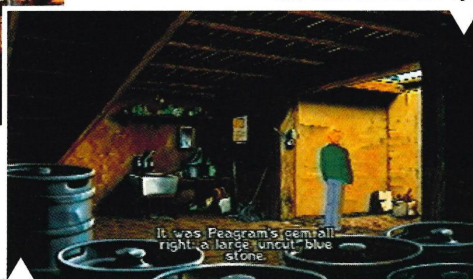


The scene of devastation left by the bomb is horrific. Good job the cafe wasn't all that busy

The trail leads you to Ireland, and you begin to realise that there's more to this than meets the eye



This is no way to run a murder investigation, but George's methods seem to work okay for him so why question them?



It was Peagram's centall right-a large uncut blue stone



The cut scenes are nothing short of cinema quality animation and are a credit to Revolution



GENRE COMPARISON

Game Discworld

Software House Psygnosis

Bit of a hit and miss affair that appealed mainly because it was associated with Terry Pratchett and it was the first real point and click PlayStation adventure. I quite liked it actually and played it to a finish, but not many others could really be bothered with its illogical puzzles

PRO SCORE

GAME Broken Sword
CONTACT 0171 368 2255

GENRE Adventure
RELEASE DATE Out Now

SOFTWARE HOUSE Sony
PRICE £44.99

GRAPHICS 9

SOUND 9

GAMEPLAY 8

LASTABILITY 8

Adventure fans will undoubtedly cream over this as I did. It's got just about everything you could ever want from a game of this type in plentiful amounts. Superb graphics, excellent soundtrack, plenty of humour and a great script all add up to make Broken Sword truly engrossing in just about every way. I defy you not to finish it! It's impossible to leave it alone once you get going. I'm not saying it can't be bettered though. It can, and if it is in the near future then PlayStation adventure fans are going to be very happy indeed.

8 1/2
OVERALL
OUTTA 10

DAN Proof that PC style adventures can work on a console, and very nice it looks too

JAY Ooh, it's just like a cartoon innit? This is a top point-and-click jape that'll thrill the adventure junkies

ANDY I've not played it very much as Steve hogged it but what I did play was definitely impressive

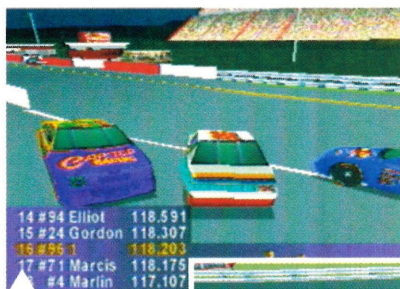
ALEX This genre's not my cup of tea at all, and I haven't played Broken Sword so read the review

NASCAR Racing '96

Every form of sport is represented in many games on the PlayStation so why not Nascar racing? We're only waiting for cricket and rugby for the complete set



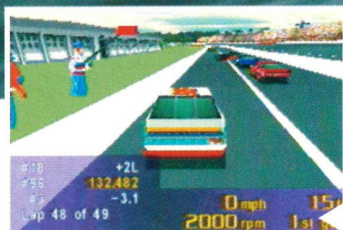
Your car comes to standstill inside the pits. This is a shot when you leave the circuit after a race. The car looks in surprisingly good shape don't you think?



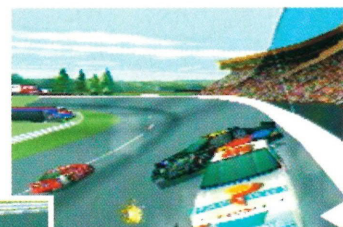
118.203 is the average speed for the lap but it still leaves you in sixteenth on the grid for the race itself



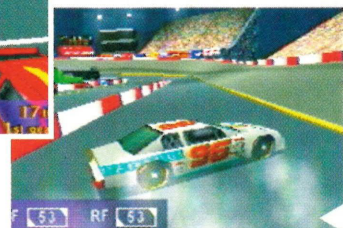
Chaos unfolds as the backmarkers get well and truly in the way



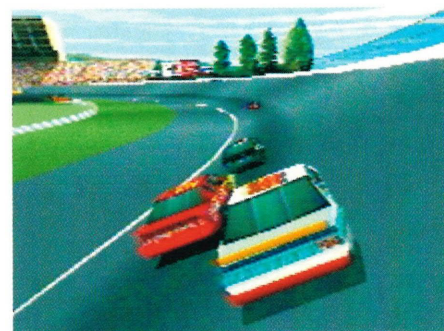
In the pit lane: Prepare for some serious car changes to gain valuable speed and some places



A high speed spin has resulted in the car facing the wrong way. Many places will be lost and the damage will be high



The tyres won't stand for too much more of this sliding about before they need replacing. The pits are always available



The thing about Nascar Racing is it's ultimately incredibly dull apart from the overly spectacular crashes you witness from time to time. Other than this, it's just a load of colourful and powerful cars blasting around a dome circuit at ludicrous speeds.

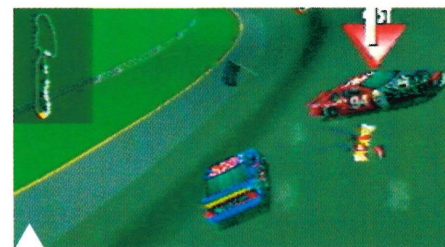
This is the essence of the game. You pick a car, jump in and drive like a maniac. This isn't a call to smash other cars up in true Destruction Derby style, you still must finish high in the rankings and attempt to win the championship. There are no points awarded for impressive smashes.

Unsurprisingly, there are tons of courses for you to race on which are real tracks on the Nascar calendar. The only downside to this is that if you fancy a varied romp through twists and turns that the devil himself would be scared to tackle, you will be horribly disappointed.

It's nothing more than a glorified version of the first Scalextric circuit you ever had. There are cars aplenty but hour after hour of driving around a dome is hardly be the greatest challenge you'll encounter. Popping down the shops is a far greater and more interesting challenge.

This isn't to say it's a terrible game, it's well presented and has numerous options from skill levels down to the tyre pressures for maximum performance and handling. As you progress you will gradually learn what each and every car tuning option will do.

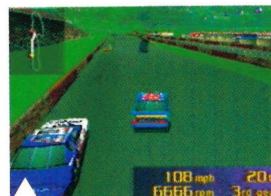
The car's performance is either enhanced or



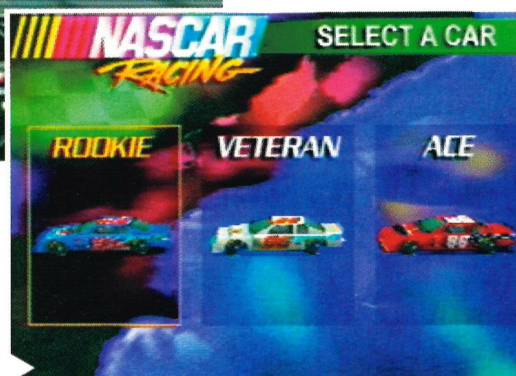
Waiting for the leaders to come around again is a bit of a laugh. This guy won't be going any further so his efforts have been wasted



The view from inside the car is a little restricted but is by far the most realistic way to play. There's a limited view so extra care is needed



The black flag being waved is for exceeding the 55 mph speed limit in the pit lane. Easily done so be wary of it



There's no paint shop unfortunately so these default colours are all there is on offer

diminished by your pit customisations. These are more than perplexing to anyone who knows next to nothing about race cars but a bit of a tinkering here and there could just do the trick. After some trial and error you will begin to learn which aspects to tweak for a maximum all-round performance.

Then there's the racing itself which proves there's no guarantee of an easy run. Since the cars are all so powerful and seem to be as armoured as a Tiger tank, they barge and shunt other drivers like there's no tomorrow. Not on purpose you understand. Oh no. The close quick and simple domes will mean there's more than the occasional coming together during any race. This is why it's better to start as high on the grid as you can. Attempting to carve through the field is a task which isn't recommended. A tiny shunt or clip of a wing can send you spinning towards a barrier at speed.

Graphically it's as you would expect, featuring plenty of colours, cars and a whole lot of tarmac. The circuits are all much the same with the main differences being the lengths of the domes. It doesn't look too detailed but with the three different views it can be impressive. The greatest of these is the in-car view from which you can only see straight ahead.

The visibility is somewhat limited from the roll cage inside and you only have a rear view mirror to see what's on the way. If there's a vehicle to the side it will undoubtedly be in one major blind spot.

The engine drone is a little tedious as in most

racing games but other than this there aren't too many sounds to speak of. Just the occasional clang as you scrape a wall or a smash when you hit something or someone else.

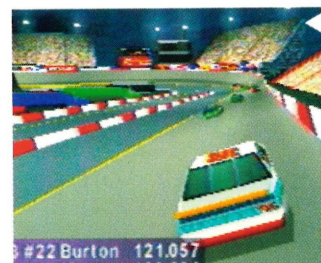
Controlling the car is incredibly simple using only an accelerate and brake button with the D-pad. Things only become slightly more tricky when you progress to manual gears. Even then, it's only a case of adapting to the new set up. It really is a simple pick up and play affair.

The only previous attempt at converting Nascar racing onto the PlayStation was in Andretti Racing which had both Indy as well as the Nascar seasons, but at the end of the day that was as bland as they come.

Nascar is a great improvement on Andretti racing in that it's more detailed, colourful and much more responsive in terms of controls but the one thing that lets it down is that the dome circuits really are the worst. This may be because its staying true to the actual sport but surely a bit of artistic licence could be called upon and some new circuits developed.

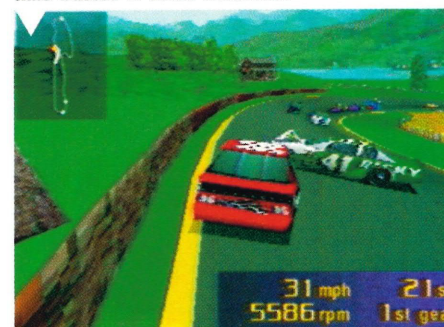
Racing games are something which can work very well indeed, as proven by games like Ridge Racer, WipEout and the massive hit F1 but Nascar has a lot of competition from some far more worthy releases.

If racing around domes for hours on end is your idea of fun however, you should definitely take a stroll in this direction.



See this dome? Well you'd better get used to it. You'll see plenty more of these in time.

Just one mistake and the race could be ruined. So many places are lost and time wasted in these situations



Pos	Car	Driver	Laps	Lead	Time
13	30	Johnny Benson	22,500	0	124
14	16	Bobby Labonte	23,087	0	121
15	40	Ward Burton	21	0	120
16	3	Dale Earnhardt	21	1	120
17	5	Terry Labonte	21	1	116
18	71	Dave Marcis	21	0	111
19	17	Darrell Waltrip	21	0	109
20	22	Ward Burton	41	0	107
21	2	Rusty Wallace	41	0	105

A bad performance from the human player. At least he's finished and gained some valuable points in the championship



Lordy! It's an actual circuit. No getting dizzy now. There's even some scenery to be looked at. A rare break from the dome circuits

PRO SCORE

GAME Nascar Racing '96
CONTACT 01734 303322

GENRE Racing Sim
RELEASE DATE December

SOFTWARE HOUSE Sierra
PRICE £44.99

GRAPHICS 8
SOUND 6
GAMEPLAY 8
LASTABILITY 6

I haven't got a problem with Nascar racing. My only gripe is that racing around dome circuits is so dull it all seems pointless. I suppose that can be said of most sports but my quarrel is that some are at least enjoyable to play or watch. Nascar is no fun to watch however, apart from the crashes which, if we're all to be honest, are the reasons for most people watching it. With all the skill levels and numerous courses as well as the seemingly endless car configurations it can be played for long periods and become engrossing.

7
OVERALL OUTTA 10

STEVE A no frills racer that's good fun to play. Must admit I'd be disappointed if I'd paid for it though
JAY Another driving title? Stop it. Stop it right now. Especially as this one's dull as ditch water in my opinion
DAN With Destruction Derby 2 on the starting grid as well, it's hard to see the point in buying this
ALEX Too many of the tracks are oval for my liking, but it's an accurate enough simulation

Blast Chamber

*Difficult to categorise this one. Part beat'em-up, part sports game, part puzzle
– your best bet is probably to file it under bloody good game*



The levels are littered with obstacles placed there solely to make your life difficult



Blast Chamber then eh? What's it all about? I suppose the obvious answer would be to say it comprises a lot of blasting inside a chamber and leave it at that, but I don't think I'd get away with that so more detail is called for.

The action takes place in 2096, a twisted, amoral future where people derive pleasure from watching genetically engineered ultimate athletes beat each other to a pulp in a quest to stick a little glowing ball into a hole (a bit like a futuristic WWF then I suppose, without the ball and the hole of course).

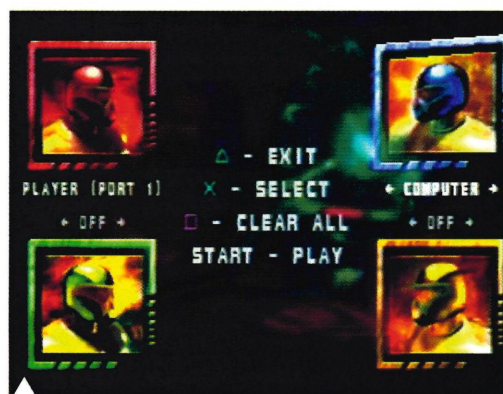
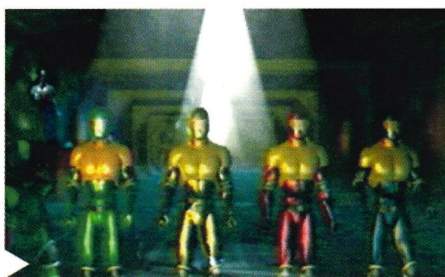
Unfortunately, you are one such athlete and in the dog eat dog world of the Blast Chamber it's kill or be killed. Thankfully though, as an ultimate athlete you have never known anything different. Born and raised on sophisticated training complexes known only as stables and completely isolated from the rest of the world you exist for one specialised purpose, to win at The Game.

Well now the years of hard work and training have finally paid off and you too can get the chance to be killed in the name of sport! The only drawback is that they never actually told you that the consequences of losing are death and you're not all that keen now you know the full story.

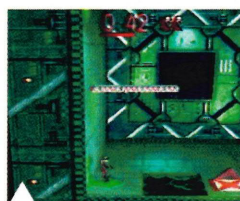
Basically though, this is all pretty useless information because Blast Chamber is one of those games where the story's only been attached through a sense of duty rather than any real desire to have one. This isn't necessarily a bad thing because a game like this doesn't need a plot for the player to get enjoyment out of it, but it does help to set the scene and easily adds enough to the product to make it a worthwhile effort.

Playing Blast Chamber is at first enormously

As the combatants make their way to the arena they know that only one is coming back alive

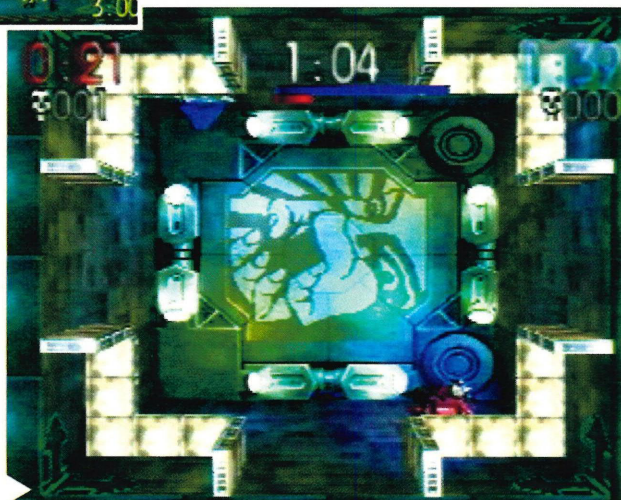


You can still have four participants when you're on your own but it's just not the same though is it?



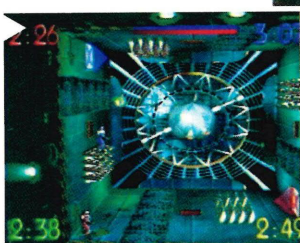
Put your foot on one of the green arrows seen here and the whole chamber will rotate

The whole game has been designed and programmed by hot shot developers
Attention to Detail



See those coloured triangles? Well the aim is to get the ball into your colour corresponding triangle

When the multi player battle gets up things tend to get pretty frantic



confusing. The early levels are sparse to give you a chance to get to grips with the fundamental controls but still you'll find yourself lagging behind the computer opponents as they continually knock you off the ball and run rings around you scoring points almost at will.

The best way to approach it is to spend some time both reading the manual and playing through the exceptionally handy tutorial mode until you find your feet. If not, your first few hours of play will not be happy ones and you'll find yourself getting frustrated very easily.

This is because the subtle nuances of the gameplay take quite some time to master and the 'hammer around frantically pressing all the buttons in the hope something goes right' technique most definitely doesn't work in this case.

The artificial intelligence level of the computer opponents is set quite high even right at the start and initially you'll find it very difficult even to come close to victory. There are a number of different modes of play for you to experiment with so hopefully your interest will be maintained even when things aren't going your way early on.

Blast Chamber comes into its own when you stick in a multi tap and get three friends around for some multi-player fun. In a similar way to the classic Bomberman the frantic action is unbelievably infectious, not to mention infuriating.

It's a solid enough single player game but once I'd been through a couple of levels I was itching to reach for the power button and get on with something else. Multi-player is, unsurprisingly a whole different prospect altogether.

Once you get the upper hand over your mates

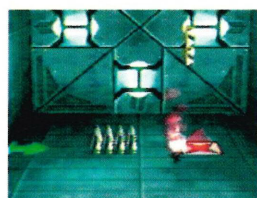
you just don't want to stop and relinquish that position, and your friends don't want to pack it in until they've got their own back. I can see this leading to some hilarious, late night beered up sessions that go on well into the early hours until the last person passes out and accidentally pushes the reset button with his or her nose.

The best games are often the ones that you don't think much of at first but grow to love over a period and Blast Chamber is one of these. There are very few hidden features (if any) and the whole game is laid bare for you right from the off. The thing is though, there's so much to it that you can't hope to uncover everything until you've absolutely played it to death.

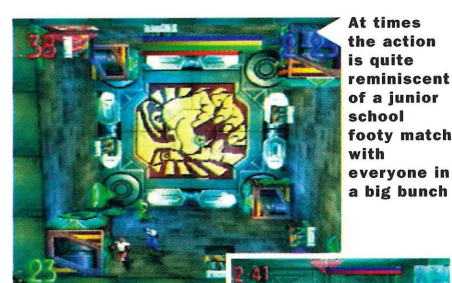
Whether the single player will ever be bothered enough to stick with it for that long is debatable but for anyone who likes to play games with other human opponents rather than silicon ones, chances are they'll get too see most of what the game has to offer.

It's maybe a bit limited to ever be hailed as a classic though, even in multi-player mode. It's a good laugh, looks impressive enough, has plenty of fast, frantic and violent action but something holds it back and I can't quite put my finger on what.

Maybe it's the lack of anything outstandingly original, maybe it's the wasted potential of a well written storyline that never actually goes anywhere, or maybe it's the fact that you don't ever feel like you're totally involved with the game and struggle to relate with the character. Whatever it is it places it firmly in the 'good game but could have been so much better' pile. Not so much a missed opportunity as a half taken one.



The game combines elements of a number of different game styles, beat'em-up being one



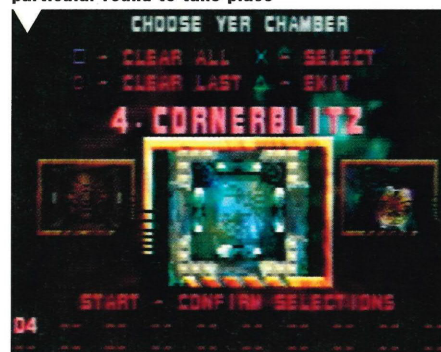
At times the action is quite reminiscent of a junior school footy match with everyone in a big bunch



When the timer runs out your bomb will explode if you haven't scored

Better do something quick or your player will be going up in smoke before you know it

You can choose in which chamber you want each particular round to take place



PRO SCORE

GAME Blast Chamber
CONTACT 0181 742 9400

GENRE Miscellaneous
RELEASE DATE Out Now

SOFTWARE HOUSE Activision
PRICE £44.99

GRAPHICS 8
SOUND 6
GAMEPLAY 7
LASTABILITY 8

Me and Blast Chamber should be best of mates by now. I've previewed it twice and now written a review but strangely I still don't feel any closer to it than I did the very first time I played it. It's not that I don't like it because I do, it's just a bit anonymous, and none of its features really stand out as being particularly good. Certainly an exciting game in its multi player mode, it's even fairly solid single-player fun and is best described as an all round good product. Just not all that outstanding.

7
OVERALL
OUTTA 10

DAN Creeps up on you, like a sneaky goblin, and reveals itself as a quality little game

JAY Can be quite absorbing, given enough time, but it's certainly a lot more fun in multi-player mode

ANDY Weird release alert! From the start to finish it's more intriguing than interesting

ALEX Certainly eye-catching, if only for its bizarreness. And it's better than its ad campaign

Game Title **Road Rage, Broken Helix, Suikoden, Contra**

Software House **Konami** The king of the arcade is now set to release its latest bunch

King Konami

By Andy Sharp

Contra

Times are busy indeed at Konami and another addition to the masses of upcoming releases is Contra. In an action adventure set in 3-D texture mapped environment, PlayStation owners are given the added bonus of being able to wear 3-D glasses to bring the whole scenario into another dimension. These glasses will be sold with the game so nobody misses out on this unique opportunity. This may seem like a bit of a gimmick yet it works surprisingly well in practice.

The one or two player games can be enjoyed simultaneously and will involve players leaping into a range of different vehicles as they blast the enemy to oblivion. With the

Contra titles already selling over 4 million units since their introduction on other formats from 1987, there's no reason to believe it will stop here.

Release Date: TBA



They're something never seen before on the PlayStation but the 3-D glasses are a unique selling point which work surprisingly well. Whether this is just to divert your attention away from a rather average game remains to be seen. The truth will be revealed in an issue very soon before its release in December

The entire script has been rewritten in the States for a late teen market to give the entire thing a more adult theme to complement the gore and Zelda-esque scenario. Graphically it is crammed with isometric views and if you play for long enough it will have you equally as involved as the old Nintendo Zelda games did



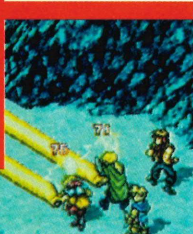
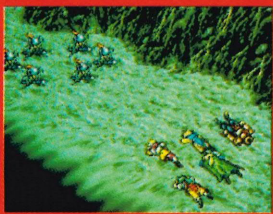
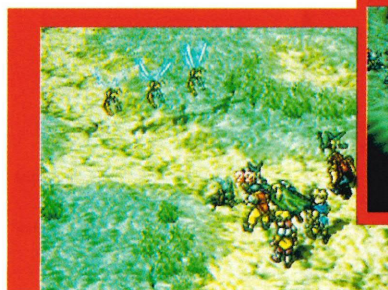
Suikoden

Next up is Suikoden, an in depth RPG experience which should be ready for battle around December. You take charge of a band of rebels who are challenging the might of the Red Moon Empire. Firstly you must explore the Empire and locate the band of rebels while killing monsters and interacting with characters you'll meet along the way.

Other dilemmas you will encounter are physical and moralistic. Your decisions will have a great effect on the events in this fantasy world.

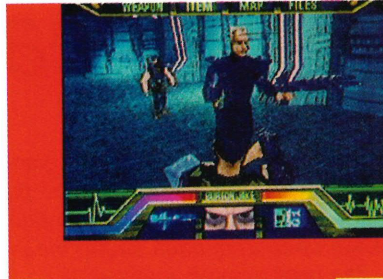
There's a new war battle system which enables you to plan strategic attacks to cripple the opposition from quick charges to a full blown air assault. Obviously there's a lot more to this and the rest of the games mentioned here and more will be revealed in the full reviews very soon.

Release Date: TBA



of games in the wake of International Track And Field

A number of views are on offer for you to take full advantage of your surroundings and some careful attention to your radar is your best chance to break through the challenge unscathed. Following clues and solving the numerous puzzles and piecing together the information is an aspect which should keep anyone occupied for quite some time

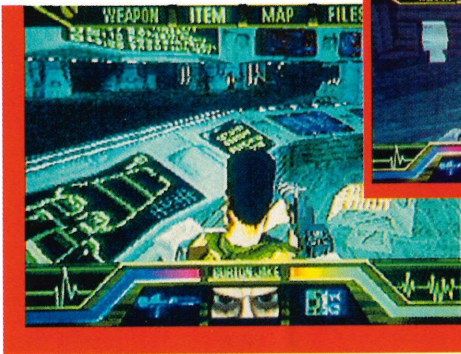


Broken Helix

Broken Helix is a 3-D action game in which you are an explosives expert in the US Marines named in true macho style, Jake Burton. Along the way you will have to uncover the mystery surrounding Area 51. The scientists have set bombs and it's up to you along with other units to discover the truth while surviving a whole manner of threats to your well being.

Involving some role playing elements with a non linear progression, it promises to be one hell of a challenge with many different endings and twists. With the added element of puzzle solving it looks like this may be very tricky to better.

Release Date: TBA



According to Peter Stone the UK Consumer Division Manager at Konami: "We have gone all out to create a storyline that will really involve players in its depth and maturity. Taking concepts that are both timeless and current we're sure players of all ages will find something to appeal in this product." They may just be right. Look out for the full review closer to the end of the year



A big hit in the arcades Road Rage has now been enhanced to feature five times the number of vehicles, extra speed classes and if you save an impressive race and reload the game you are able to challenge your last race time in a battle against yourself. A novel idea and it's executed in style

Road Rage

For the frustrated driver there's the chance of taking out your anger against computer sprites rather than being a more than a little ridiculous and quite sad by pummeling a fellow driver. Having said that, the arcade machine has been the source of numerous fights in Japan but they're an odd bunch over there. Without them however, the world would be missing out on Road Rage, potentially the most addictive racing game to appear on any format.

Putting you behind the wheel of a futuristic racing machine which really does travel at speeds seldom seen before, it is a perfect conversion of the arcade classic. It could be the racer to topple the WipeOuts of this world from their perch.

There's no reason why it shouldn't.

Release Date: TBA



PRO COMPETITION

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SHARP

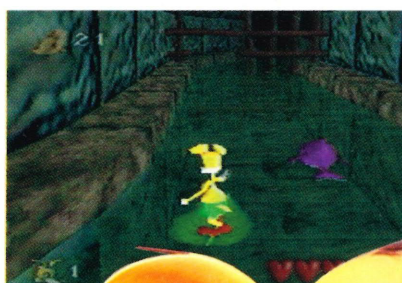
INTELLIGENT THINKING



Ocean is hot on the heels of Sony with its very own rival to Crash Bandicoot - namely Cheesy The Mouse! The platform icon showdown will begin soon enough as both titles battle for shelf space in the run up to Christmas. In the meantime you can cast your vote for the best running, jumping game hero around with the massive competitions we've lined-up for you all in this very issue.

To vote for Cheesy and to put yourself in good stead for walking

away with this wicked Sharp camcorder (worth a staggering £1,000!) or copies of his game, all you have to do is answer the easy-peasy Cheesy question and complete the coupon on this page:



Question:

Name a cheese which is made backwards. Is it...

- ☐ A) CHEDDAR
☐ B) EDAM
☐ C) STILTON

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 SLAYER
 TEKKEN 2
 TIME COMMANDO
 TOTAL NBA
 TRUE PINBALL
 VIEWPOINT
 VIRTUA GOLF
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 BRAINDEAD 13
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BUST A MOVE 2
 CASTLEVANIA 2
 CENTRE COURT
 DESTRUCTION DERBY 2
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 FIRO AND KLAUD
 GEAR N GUTS
 GENDER WARS
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 NASCAR RACING
 NBA JAM EXTREME
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 BEDLAM
 BEYOND THE BEYOND
 BLOOD OMEN :
 LEGACY OF KAIN

BLAST CHAMBER
 BROKEN SWORD
 BUSTER BROS
 COLLECTION
 CARNAGE HEART
 CASPER
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Game Title **Tempest X**

Software House **Interplay** *Tempest, created in 1981, was a truly awesome game that*

X-ing up a storm

By Alex Lee

Dave Theurer, who designed the original Tempest and wrote the software, said his intention was to make a first-person perspective version of Space Invaders. He ended up doing something completely new and different. He dreamt about aliens coming from the centre of the Earth and took it from there.

Although known for his hard work and ability to focus on, and conquer, exceedingly tough software problems, Dave Theurer looks back upon his days at Atari as fun and rewarding. He remembers, "It was just so exciting working on these new games.

All my life I loved explosions. When I went to college I was a chemistry major because I wanted to do something where I could make explosions. As a kid I had a chemistry set and I'd blow stuff up all the time.

Eventually you learn you can't do that in real life, so the next best thing is to do it on screen, so here I was blowing stuff up. Simulating real life is fun too. It's almost like you can create your own universe. Well, you are creating your own universe.

That's rewarding, to see something come alive."

Tempest was a game that captivated people from the very start. Like a number of these games that were very addictive, the Tempest controls were good enough so once you learned how to manipulate them you could almost become one with the machine. A good Tempest player gets to spin that knob, do the firing at the right time and get into sync with the machine and find a rhythm.

You were so close to the action that part of you entered the experience. You forgot was going on around and were just there – you could get very good at it.

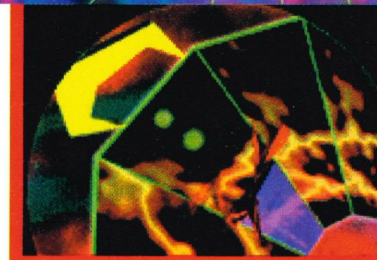
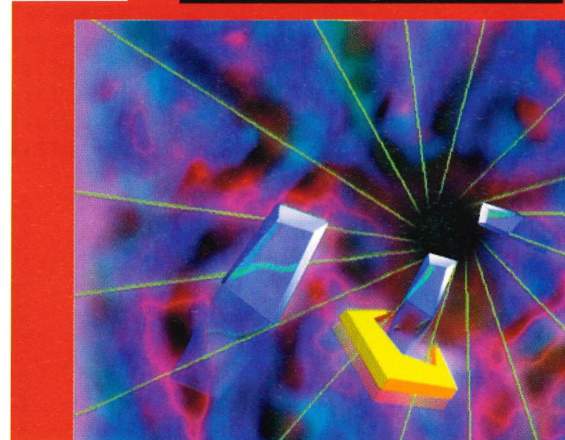
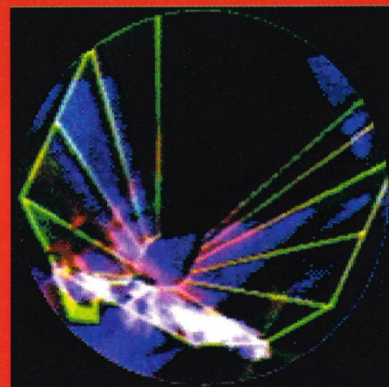
Players often found a sense of welcome escape in the video games they played and this was very much the intention of some of the great game designers. Dave Theurer said of

Tempest, "I want to design it for a guy who's totally frazzled by his job and needs a way to temporarily escape. There's a certain class of games – where you just get into a trance while playing.

As long as you're in this trance you'll do fine." Interplay hopes that this principle will apply to the forthcoming PlayStation

release of Tempest X.

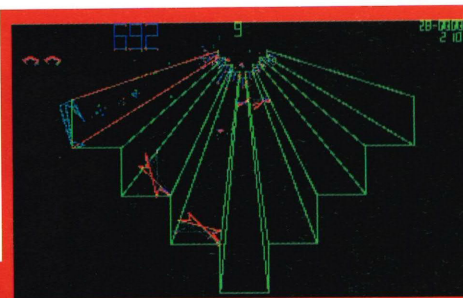
Release Date: Jan '97



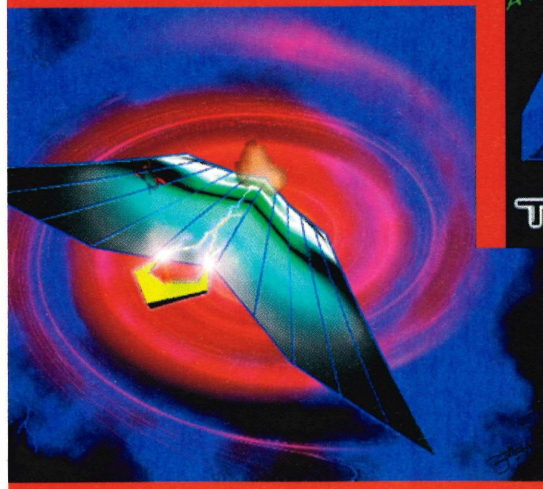
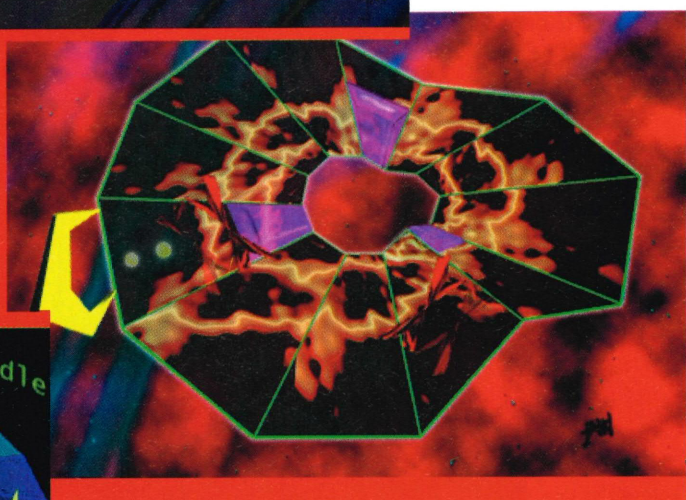
The latest instalment in the Tempest experience, Tempest X, offers substantial innovative new features not seen in its predecessors, the Atari Jaguar 2000 and the legendary arcade hit. Perhaps the most notable of these features is the incredible graphic effects which have been added to the already exciting gameplay. With its animation cycles running at a rapid-fire 60 frames per second and the uniquely designed, texture-mapped webs to further enhance the games visual impact, Tempest X promises a feast for all PlayStation owners

transported players into abstract realms of space. Tempest X is set to do it again

The concept behind the Tempest series is deceptively simple you (the player) are a creature at one end of an extruded 2-dimensional shape (the web). The game objective is to keep the creatures (enemies) on the far end of the web from rising up to your end and destroying you. You must travel the perimeter of the web, shoot the enemies and kill them before they shoot and kill you



Power-ups and all-new enemies now inhabit the web – such as the long range droid, an elusive heavy-on-the-firepower ally capable of freezing sections or the sharpshooter droid – a helper who's best at picking off baddies lurking on the outskirts. Jump bonus icons reward you with either increased jumping distance or bonus points for those who are 'maxxed out' on their jumping capabilities. Additionally three different shot power-ups, each with five power-levels, offer varied and dramatic ways to waste the eerily glowing 3-D fiends of the web!



Organic, animated backgrounds have replaced the dated static starfield of the original classic. These swirl, pulse and warp to a variety of eclectic techno tunes and sound effects. An all-new two player co-operative mode allows friends to wage war against the more vengeful, faster wave of enemies on the same web to create a duelling ground where only one can win

Tempest X thrusts you into an intergalactic battle zone. Go up against the meanest alien of them all, the UFO, and blast him to bits with your Superzapper. Instantly recognizable to millions of arcade players, Tempest X should be a sure fire hit. It is a highly enhanced version of Tempest, one of the most popular arcade games of all time, and it's coming to the PlayStation

Game Title **Batman Forever, The Crow, NBA Jam Extreme, Iron & Blood,**
Software House **Acclaim** When setting about developing games, this company doesn't

Acclaim mixes it up

By Andy Sharp

Batman Forever

As with the other Batman movies, the third was a huge success and although the plot was a little thin the effects and Gothic city were second to none. The Batman games we've seen on the consoles over the years have, like their movie counterparts, generally lacked substance. This time around Acclaim is trying to correct this problem with its conversion of the arcade smash hit of Batman Forever.

Rather than attempt to follow the movie itself and have driving or flying stages, the development team – Iguana – has stuck to the horizontally scrolling beat'em-up. It's kept the movie characters in here and made everything as dark as can be but this is where the similarities end.

Your ultimate goal is to prevent the Riddler and Two Face from putting their special boxes on people's televisions. To do this Batman and the Boy Wonder are called upon to pummel hundreds of enemy henchmen and numerous end-of-level cronies who are all allies of the two madmen.

The odds will be stacked heavily against you as the enemies have cars, bikes, machine guns, chains and a host of other offensive advantages. You on the other hand have batarangs, grappling hooks and a mad swinging weapon with which the caped crusader swings across the screen at speed taking out all enemy threats, albeit temporarily.

Release date: December '96

The game can be enjoyed by one or two players simultaneously so the dynamic duo can work together to defeat the enemies and obviously this should make the task a little less daunting. Enemies can be thrown both into the distance and towards the player as well as the standard enemy exit routes to the right and left



While in development in the arcade the company's RAX technology allows the player to hear the music and the selected sound bytes from the movie simultaneously. This means the programmers can include almost any sound or soundtrack without translating or reprogramming. It can play up to 12 sounds simultaneously so this should give you some idea as to how busy the game is in terms of sound

You may change characters between continues to utilise either Batman's or Robin's strengths as each stage may be tackled far simpler using a different character. They are both unique fighters with their own characteristics in terms of power, speed and moves. Add to this the power-ups you collect and you could be a huge force against the enemy attack

do things by half. Its new batch should prove this point beyond any doubt

Next in the pipeline for the Acclaim/Pressman partnership is a conversion of **The Mutant Chronicles**, a futuristic action film which should begin production very soon. If **The Crow** lives up to early expectations this could be a hugely successful partnership



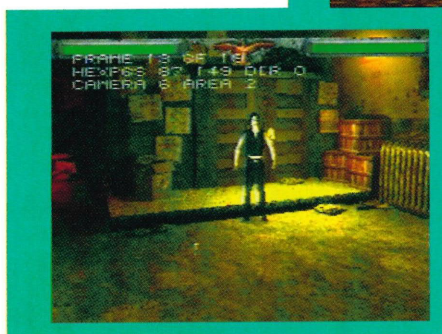
The Crow: City of Angels

Still in its early days **The Crow** will be arriving around the same time as the movie hits the big screen. This is the first collaboration between Acclaim and Pressman, the film's producer. When it's finally completed it will be an adventure/action game with you playing the part of the Crow himself as he stalks the streets in this extremely dark tale.

You will be called upon to punch and kick your way through the levels while collecting power-ups and weapons to assist your progress. Both Acclaim and Pressman are working together from the film development to the software storyboards to its completion so that the game is a true representation of the original movie.

Release date: TBA

After the premature death of **Brandon Lee** during the filming of the first **Crow** movie the role has now been taken over by **Vincent Perez**. Hope he fares better than his predecessor and remembers his bullet proof vest



NBA Jam Extreme

After the initial rush of official NBA releases the PlayStation has been given a welcome break from the world of dunks and squeaky sneakers. That is until the release of the latest in the long line of NBA games reaches the shelves.

Extreme offers 30 new dunks and some simple gameplay. On first impressions it seems far simpler to pick up and play instantly than any of the previous releases. This can't be a bad thing.

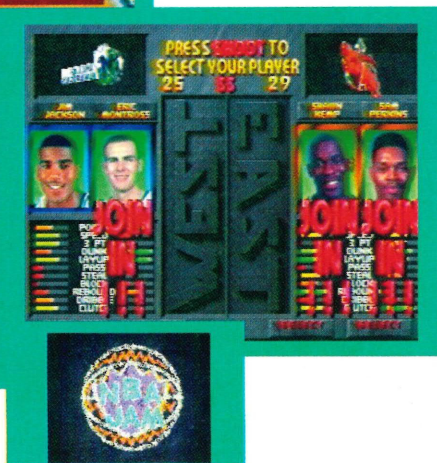
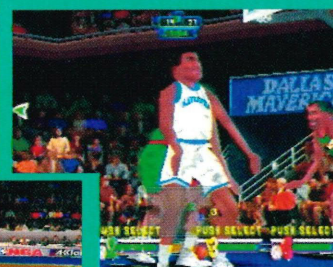
It's yet another arcade conversion and is compatible with a multi-tap for a four-player competition. This works nicely since there are only two players per team so some team work is definitely required.

The players have been motion captured from Washington Bullets star **Juwan Howard**. His motions have been used to assist in the animation on every team's players.

As with other NBA releases players have an outstanding run they will become 'Smokin' – the quickest and most deadly accurate player on the court. This is exactly the same effect as the 'On fire' in earlier games. As you may have noticed it's by no means a true simulation.

Release date: December '96

Plenty of extras are included in the form of an 'extreme' button which enhances your player's abilities in every department. An addition to this which should make things far more interesting is the increase in speed on the shot clock for the leading team thus giving the other team the chance to pull it back rather than the opponents just running it down



Previous NBA releases have been successful on numerous consoles over the years as well as on the PlayStation and judging from what's on offer here there's no reason why this couldn't be equally as popular. It's even got the secret characters and a password option as well as the chance to play in a full season

Iron & Blood

There's definitely a mixed bag on the horizon from Acclaim and a 3-D beat'em-up with a difference comes in the form of Iron & Blood. The difference is it uses characters from the Advanced Dungeons and Dragons Ravenloft world.

Developed by Take 2 Interactive Software it features a total of 16 characters which come in numerous forms such as dwarves, gladiators, goblins and many more. Each has a vast range of moves and some have the ability to cast spells or use their physical attributes to down an opponent.

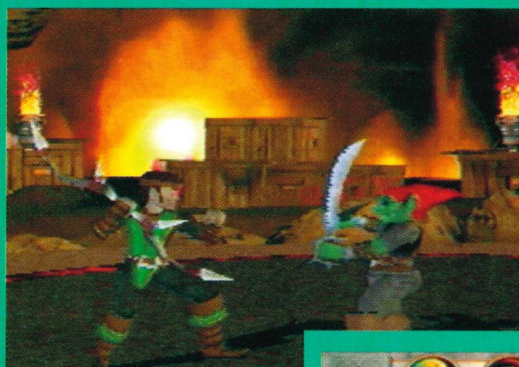
One aspect which renders this unique is the chance for a player to build up an army by a process of elimination to determine the winner. You play a one-on-one round and are awarded anything from a new spell to the chance to recruit the defeated character into your team.

Another option which is sure to appeal is the chance to build and then save characters as they win battles and gain more experience being awarded new spells along the way. It all sounds a bit strange and complicated at the moment but the full review will explain this in far greater detail.

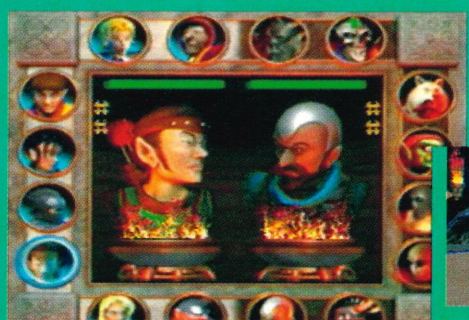
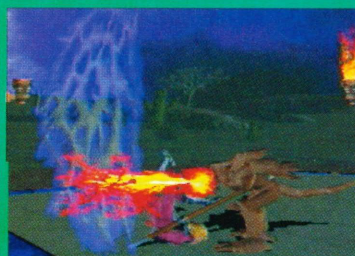
Release date: December '96



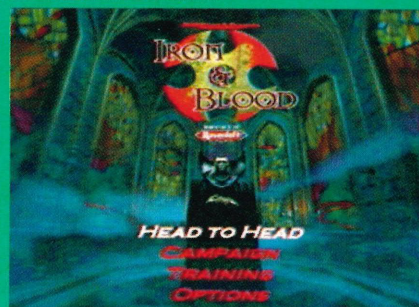
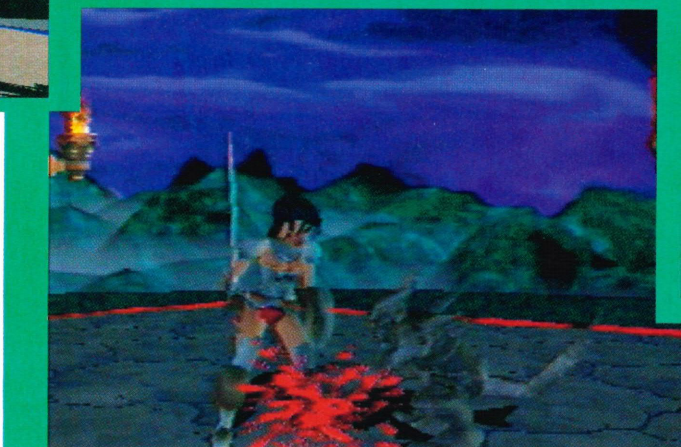
After the massive success of Alien Trilogy Acclaim is hardly resting on its laurels. Rather than simply relying on Probe to develop another blockbuster it has teamed up with Iguana and Take 2 among others to bring a varied batch of releases. And there is something for just about everyone as a result



Progression through the stages and battles gives players the chance to gain spells and artefacts. A voodoo doll allows you to transfer your damage points onto another team member prolonging that fighter's chance of successfully overcoming the opponent's attacks. A black lodestone on the other hand allows you to steal any artefact belonging to the other team



Originally pencilled for a September launch, Iron & Blood's release date has now slipped somewhat while everything is polished up. The quick fighting and impressive backdrops, not to mention the strategies involved, could be a breath of fresh air for the over-produced 3-D beat'em-up



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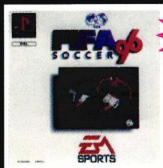
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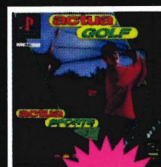
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Game Title **The Adventures of Lomax**

Software House **Psygnosis** In this new platformer, Psygnosis takes the Lemmings legacy

New adventures in Lemmingland

By **Andy Sharp**

Over many years and formats the Lemmings games have provided millions of people with hour upon hour of fresh platform puzzles. These tiny fools dropped from the start and wandered aimlessly falling, drowning or being crushed by the numerous hazards on their way to the exit. The idea was to use the abilities you were given to save from death as many Lemmings as possible within the time restriction. As if anybody didn't know this already.

This time around however, the puzzle elements have taken a back seat as the Lemmings now take on the platform genre. The developer has chosen the Lemmings name as the last two games it's developed in this genre for the Amiga and the Mega Drive were released against licensed products. To counter this dilemma it's opted for using the tried-and-tested Lemmings name to prevent the game being overlooked.

It was developed by a team of two. Erwin Kloibhofer is responsible for the game code as well as the editor for the levels and enemies. His counterpart, Henk Nieborg, draws the backgrounds and animations as well as creating and editing the levels. The backgrounds have been hand drawn and use over 1,000 colours to give them a more authentic look.

Each stage makes up part of the world you're battling in and ►



Extra lives may be obtained by collecting 100 coins from rescued Lemmings or from the numerous pots situated around the levels. By far the most efficient way to collect loads of coins is to spin through the hanging swag bags which are full. You can spin through these as many times as you like before they bounce from reach. Exiting the levels you can leap into the wooden crates or if there's not one available you simply stroll off the edge of the screen. Some exits will allow you access to bonus stages where it's an all-out coin fest



one step further by transporting the tiny critters into a new dimension

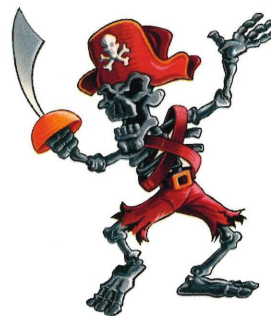
A feature unique to Lomax is the use of multi-layered levels whereby you can play on more than one level rather than simply run about in the foreground. He reaches these by traversing the numerous bridges back and forth. This is a feature which works surprisingly well and it's weird to think nobody's tried it before



Psygnosis is busy on the run in to Christmas with releases such as the spectacular WipEout 2097 and Destruction Derby 2. Other releases include Monster Trucks and this platformer so there's something for everyone cropping up in the next few months



The levels will range from the Wild West to an Indian village, ghost ship and the graveyard. You'll encounter many foes and devices which stand in the way of safe progress. There are also cannons, springboards, balloons and others which will help clear certain segments unscathed



New adventures in Lemmingland

► this wouldn't be a platformer if you weren't called upon to defeat an end-of-level guardian before you progress to the next world. So that's exactly what's in store here.

The characters have been created from existing games and blown up to a size suitable for a platformer. As a stroke of luck Psygnosis is also looking into developing a TV series and numerous drawings of these characters have been used such as the knight, a ninja, rock star and clown.

The hero of the proceedings has taken on the form of the knight and must rescue the transformed Lemmings from the spell put upon them by Evil Ed. To do this the developer has incorporated some elements from the Lemmings of old.

At some stages you must collect the abilities to build platforms or dig into scenery. Most importantly however the hero can now collect a helmet which can be used to climb, blast evil Lemmings aside as well as numerous other effects. These abilities need to be collected from the pots you break using your spin attack or hat.

All bonuses such as extra lives are collected along the way from the pots which are dotted throughout the stages so it's unwise to leave one intact as you bound through the stages.

Some of the familiar sounds are still here from the puzzlers including the standard "Oh no!" as a player bites the bullet. The rescued Lemmings too leap from the platforms and promptly use their umbrella to drift to safety.

Liverpool based PC Music have composed 20 exclusive tracks in a number of styles to suit the stages they're in. These include hill-billy rock, country and western as well as B-movie horror themes and French medieval songs. These are included to enhance the overall effect and with the use of QSound Virtual Audio can really do just that.

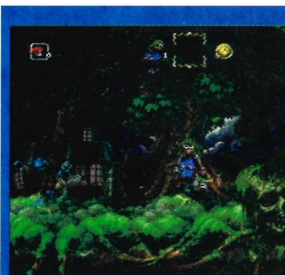
The version we've seen so far is roughly 80% completed and after some fine tuning to the playing levels and touching up some of the graphics it should be available to be given a full review in the next issue.

Release Date: Dec '96

The only previous incarnation of Lemmings was the 3D puzzler unsurprisingly titled 3D Lemmings which took the concept from old releases and brought them all into a 3D environment adding a whole new feel and refreshing the old challenge. The thinking behind this release must be that the Lemmings legacy needed to go somewhere new rather than rehash the same old ideas



Each of the keys will have some sort of effect on Lomax. You can use an ability by first choosing it and pressing the select button. Then all you need to do is press the square button and it will be executed. His hat throws are executed using the circle button and his jump and spin attacks are done with the X button



Whether this new concept for the Lemmings series will catch on is yet to be seen but with the new approach here it opens them up to a whole new player who may not necessarily be impressed by puzzle games and missed the previous games on other formats. This may also be its downfall as many people may just think it's yet another Lemmings game. Avid platform fans may take to it though, as there's still a distinct lack of the genre available on the PlayStation

Game Title **Namco Tennis, Penny Racers, Porsche Challenge**

Software House **Sony** Christmas is a busy time for everyone and it's no exception for

Sporting In The Free World

Namco Tennis

By Andy Sharp

Anybody who had a SNES with Smash Tennis will know exactly what to expect from this. Namco Tennis is as close to a direct copy as you're ever likely to see. Rather than attempt to make things as realistic in terms of looks and gameplay, the characters are very cartoony. Although the strokes played are true to the real game there are more cartoon moments when players are hit by the travelling ball.

You can choose from a great number of players to battle it out on the courts of the world, whether they be grass, clay or wood. The ball behaves and bounces at different paces depending on the court surface you're on.

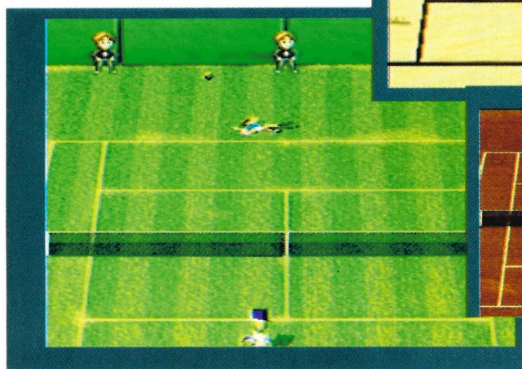
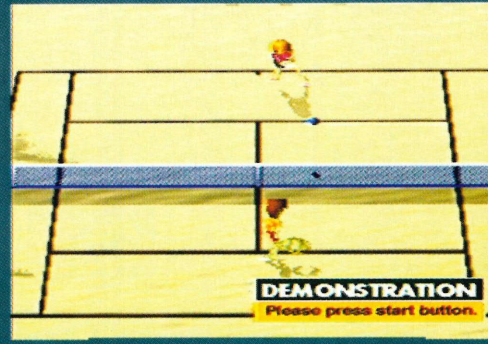
In keeping with every release so far, you have the choice of playing a single one set match or, if you're feeling brave, you can tackle a five set knock out tournament.

You can choose any court from the numerous locations available to battle it out in your own customised tournament also. How well you play is down to your adapting skills on these courts. Your tactics will be changing constantly to keep your opponent on his toes and hopefully force them into an error.

On first impressions this looks as if it could put an end to the mainly dire attempts at tennis seen so far and the heady days of a two player, five set tie break could well be in the offing again.

Release Date: TBA

Sony has been responsible for some of the greatest releases seen thus far on the PlayStation - NFL Gameday and NHL Faceoff not to mention the hugely popular Tekken games. Whether this will be as popular remains to be seen but if it's a fast and playable two player fest this could be the one for you



In terms of playability, it looks like it could be quite some time until anyone beats this attempt. The version we've seen will also be speeded up somewhat for the final release making it much quicker than the rest. The heady hours of clouting the ball back and forth could once again take over the nation's households

The players themselves vary in skill to make things a little more interesting. After a few plays these strengths and weaknesses will become apparent and it's up to you to work out exactly which tactics are more successful against other players. You will also become more accurate in your shot decisions and this is what should make Namco Tennis such a hit

the monster Sony

Penny Racers

The more cartoony racing games have been tried and tested over the years with varying degrees of success - Mario Kart on the SNES and more recently Motor Toon Grand Prix on the PlayStation.

These are class games which will undoubtedly be difficult to better. But it doesn't stop people trying. And why shouldn't they? There's potential to bring more classics into the arena and Sony has stumped for Penny Racers.

There is a choice of cars for you to race in very similar style to the old Wacky Races mobiles but they're by no means in the same vein as the recent Supersonic Racers.

The courses are dotted all over the place and you will be called upon to drive across mud, tarmac and through the occasional waterfall. There are no Silverstones or Monacos here, it's pure fiction through and through.

In total there are a mere six circuits which vary from the incredibly simple oval to the twists and turns of the Highlands. These are tackled with far greater success after you've got used to the handling of the vehicle you're in control of. For this reason the longevity of the game as a whole isn't assured in a single player contest.

Although it breaks no new ground whatsoever it's as playable as they come and herein lies its strength. Like the 'good old days' it relies heavily on gameplay rather than state of the art graphics. Whether it's any good or not will be revealed in the review.

Release Date: Out Now

It's good to see the split screen two player games becoming more popular with the developers. Penny Racers includes this option and is all the better for it. All racing games are improved with the chance to play another human opponent without having to rely on a link up cable and two copies of the game



This seems to have missed the boat as far as previews and reviews are concerned as it is already in the shops in a top sneaky move from Sony. It will be reviewed in the near future here at PSPro

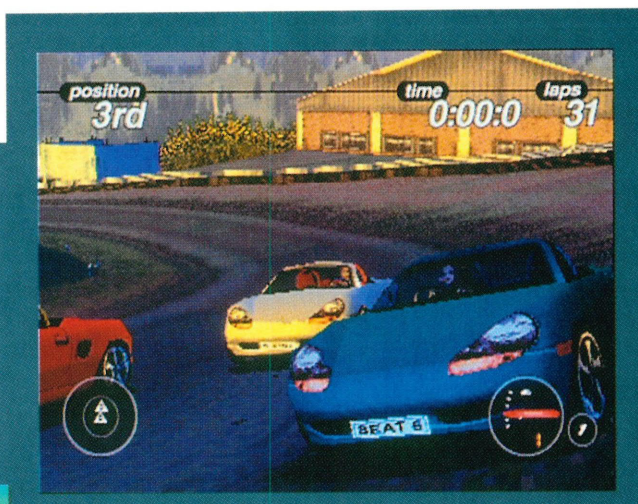
All of the cars are condensed versions of real cars making them look remarkably similar to Micro Machines. Not the ones from the old games mind, the little toys you can get. Other than this it's a quick straightforward, no messing racer which will appeal to just about anyone. Don't be expecting any Ridge Racers however, you'll be disappointed

Sporting In The Free World

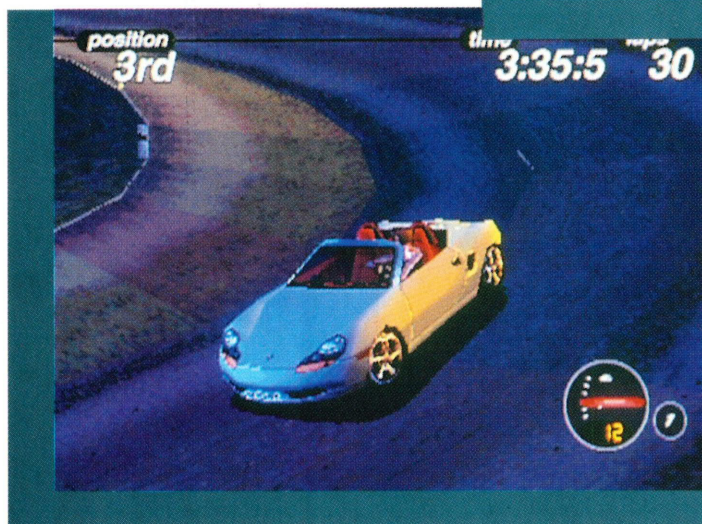
Seven unique characters are included for you to race against each with their own driving styles, so while one driver is a pushover another could be erratic or drive like the wind. It is far more enjoyable however, when playing against another human player in a split screen game



As is the norm in most racing games, there's a catch up option for naff drivers so the race is a close affair at all times with the lead changing constantly throughout. Also included are some crafty short cuts which will be open from time to time to gain valuable placings in the final standings



Sony has attempted to keep the handling and driving characteristics as realistic as possible keeping it all in real time so reflections and shadows are also as they would be. The shots here should give you some idea of what's on offer. It could quite easily be a game to rival the excellence of the Ridge Racers and Destruction Derbys not to mention F1. Only time will tell



Created by the same team responsible for the smash hit Total NBA '96, Porsche Challenge holds the same seal of quality afforded to the basketball simulation. Down to the flying leaves, mud splashes and paint work, the attention to detail has been well thought out

Porsche Challenge

Perhaps one of the biggest releases in the coming months will be Porsche Challenge, due to speed into the shops at the beginning of '97. The latest Porsche sports car, Boxster is the central car in the game which makes it all as fresh as can be.

One thing which should definitely take this to the top is the split screen two player option. There's a serious lack of quality two player games so this should be a contender to take Need For Speed to the cleaners.

There's always room for improvement and nobody seems to have attempted a full blown split screen racer except for the aforementioned Need For Speed. Other less serious games have tried this but nothing rivals it for all round excellence.

Containing five courses, Porsche Challenge has a total of 25 possible races. Perhaps the most impressive is the accurate rendition of the Stuttgart test circuit where the cars are really put through their paces.

If the early version we've seen is anything to go by then every aspect of the Porsche Boxster is accounted for and once the gameplay has been touched up it could be a title to rival the front row of the grid in racing games.

Unfortunately this will just miss the Christmas rush and appear early in the new year so don't go spending that Christmas money too early. Porsche really could be the first release of '97 to brighten the dark nights before spring arrives.

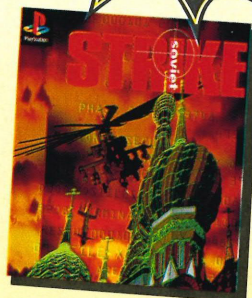
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Game Title **Hexen, War Gods**

Software House **GT Interactive** had better hope there's never a link proved between video

Don't Be Soft, Have A Fight!

By **Steve McNally**

War Gods

Oh good. A beat'em-up. But not just any old beat'em-up. A 3-D one! Just what we all want. Actually, I don't mean to be too harsh because War Gods is quite promising. It's a conversion of the arcade smash by Midway and if that isn't a guarantee of quality then I don't know what is.

It's a bizarre cross over between two of the greatest names in beat'em-up history (well, their styles of play at least). If you were to stick all the ingredients of Mortal Kombat and Tekken in a big bowl or some sort of food processor and mix them all up, you'd get something like this I reckon.

The setting reminds me of Primal Rage although don't think I'm trying to draw comparisons, that just wouldn't be fair to even a terrible fighting game. Apparently billions of years ago a being from a distant galaxy was transporting a precious cargo of life-giving ore. The turbulent formation of our solar system caused his ship to crash and scatter ore across the surface of the planet known as Earth (suprise).

Throughout the millenia ten humans came into contact with the ore and were transformed into super evolved warriors.

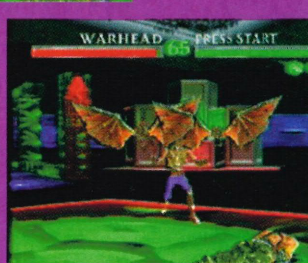
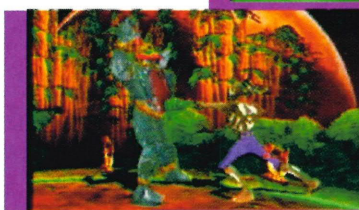
These are the War Gods who do battle in the game.

Contrived? Never!

Release Date: First Quarter '97

War Gods boasts a number of impressive features that will ensure it can at least compete. Digital Skin technology is being used for the first time to my knowledge. It does away with all those nasty polygons that constantly appear and disappear whenever the characters move into a certain position and makes the look of the game more realistic. Then again, how a game where fire leaps from the combatants fingertips could ever be considered realistic is beyond me.

Perhaps it's my sheltered upbringing



My anti-fighting game feelings often mean I don't exactly wait with baited breath for one to land on my desk and War Gods is unlikely to make me feel any different. I've seen it all before, I'm not mad about seeing it again and the simple fact is it bores me. It's nothing to do with the individual games and nothing personal against any particular software company, I'm just totally non plussed by beat'em-ups in general so I'd suggest you just look at the screenshots and ignore my spite fuelled ramblings in this particular case

It's not just about fancy graphics though. It's got that winning gameplay style made popular by the MK games, loads of interesting and very different characters and some of the bloodiest fighting action seen for some time. The combatants really do go at it hammer and tong and at times I found myself shielding my eyes from the horror on screen, but that made it difficult to hold the joypad so I had to steel myself. I don't know, kids these days, don't know how to enjoy themselves without being aggressive, wasn't like this in my day etc

o games and violent behaviour. If there is, it's in serious trouble

Hexen

Is it just me or is every GT game that comes out based around fighting, violence and general mayhem? I'm not complaining, just wondering. Final Doom, Mortal Kombat Trilogy, Quake and so on. And now Hexen and Wargods. All have a similar theme wouldn't you say?

Having said that Hexen is, if anything, slightly more cerebral than its usual offerings, but does still have more than it's fair share of blood and guts. For the uninitiated, it's like Doom in many ways but can't be described as a clone because it comes from the original developers. I suppose it's best described as more of a progression than anything else.

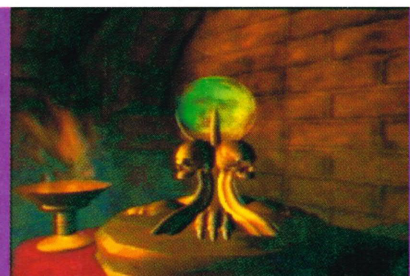
This is justified because the engine has been completely overhauled. It gives Playstation owners the chance to look up and down, fire in all directions and do loads of other stuff that generally makes the 3-D world seem all the more realistic.

The version we have in the office seems like a pretty good conversion of the PC game and with a little tweaking here and there, and some speeding up this is a sure fire hit. Far better than Doom for my money and a worthy stop gap until the eagerly awaited Quake puts in an appearance.

Release date First Quarter '97



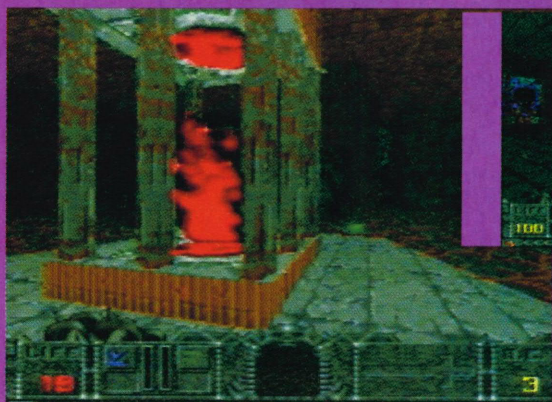
One gripe many people had with the PC version was that there was a lot of wandering about with nothing to do. This was caused because operating a switch opened a door anywhere within that particular Hub, even in an area you thought you had finished with. So once you'd cleared a place of enemies, there was nothing to do but wander around and if you were looking for a door that had been opened you needed to do this a lot. Hopefully the developers will have listened to the criticisms and acted upon them



Whereas Doom was all blood and thunder action with projectile based weapons, Hexen is more medieval in style. For instance, magic plays a far greater role in events and many of the weapons can only be used in close combat, leading to the player feeling more involved in the thick of the action. Weapons such as the mace mean you have to get so close to the monsters you can almost smell their breath and personally I find bludgeoning someone to death far more satisfying than shooting them from a distance. But I am from Salford, so that goes without saying I suppose



Hexen isn't mission based like Doom, the action takes place around a series of Hubs. This may sound a little confusing in principle, but it does work well and provides a nice balance between exploration and mayhem. Each hub leads off to other areas which then may be interconnected with different sections elsewhere in the same hub. Confused? I am and I've played it, so there's no shame in it!

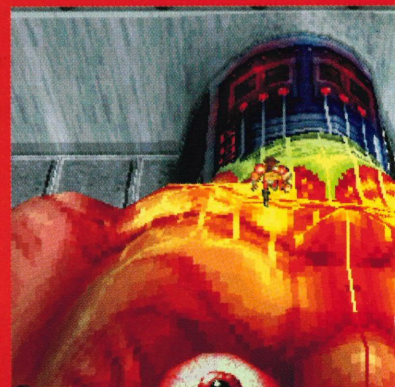
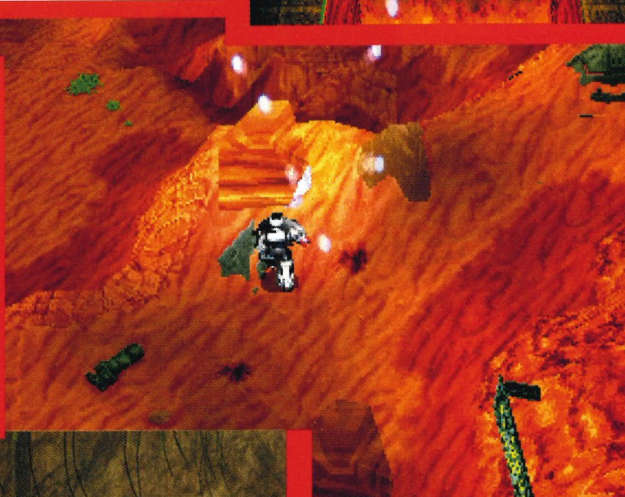
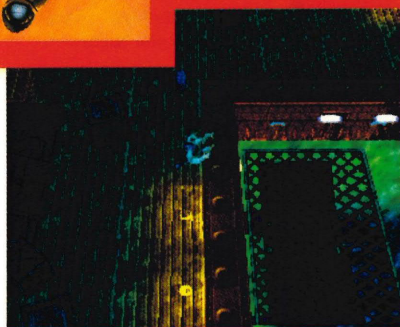
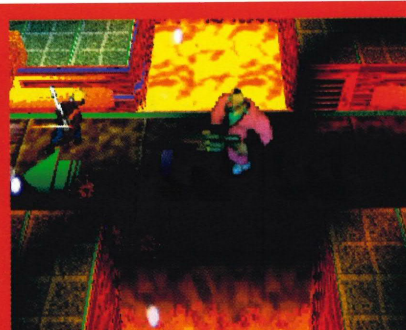


Game Title **Reloaded**

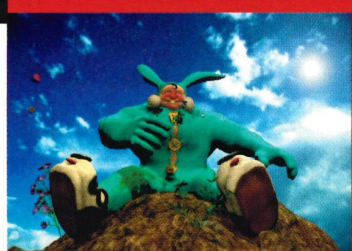
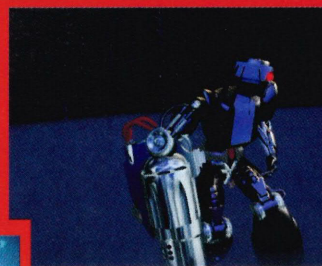
Software House **Gremlin Interactive** Last year a 3-D, top-down shoot'em-up arrived. It

F.U.B. (Fat Ugly Bastard) the bad guy from Loaded, as most of you will know, escaped at the end of the original game. His brain pod found its way onto a desert planet inhabited only by struggling artists and laid back hippies. One such struggling artist finds the pod, changes his name to C.H.E.B. (Charming Handsome Erudite Bastard) and romps off into the sunset with an armful of blank canvases and an evil plan hatching inside his whacked-out head. And so it begins..

Rewards have been included in this new and improved version, where players receive bonuses depending on how well they've kicked ass on each level. Points are awarded for grabbing the pick-ups and for their total kills per level, plus each players' special power skills are increased if their performance is better than their opponents



Original characters Mamma, Cap'n Hands, Bounca and Butch remain, and are joined by two new ones. Each has been arted by 2000AD scribbler, Jason Brashill, including one of the new girls, Sister Magpie. She's a cyber-nun on a mission from God, tooled-up with one Mother Superior of a weapon



Besides the original Loaded title, Gremlin's PlayStation history has been one of sporting abilities. Their past line-up consists of Actua Soccer and the fabulous Actua Golf, with proposed plans for strengthening the Actua branding over the next year with a cricket, basketball and tennis addition to the family. Let's hope they make as big an impact as their previous Actua titles, eh?

kicked ass, it spilt blood and now it's back with a vengeance!

Please wait... Re-Loading

By Jay Sharples

Anyone remember the old Amiga title, The Chaos Engine? The one where you romped around a huge, old, mad scientist's mansion looking for keys, solving puzzles and shooting everything that moved? No? Well I did, so when Gremlin's Loaded arrived in our offices – ooh, it must a year ago now – comparisons were made almost immediately.

The thing was, Gremlin had taken this popular 'genre', altered the playing angle, overhauled the graphics, upped the playing ante, covered the whole caboodle in blood and guts and ended up – if we're being honest here – producing an enthralling bloodsoaked blaster that was a first on the chosen format.

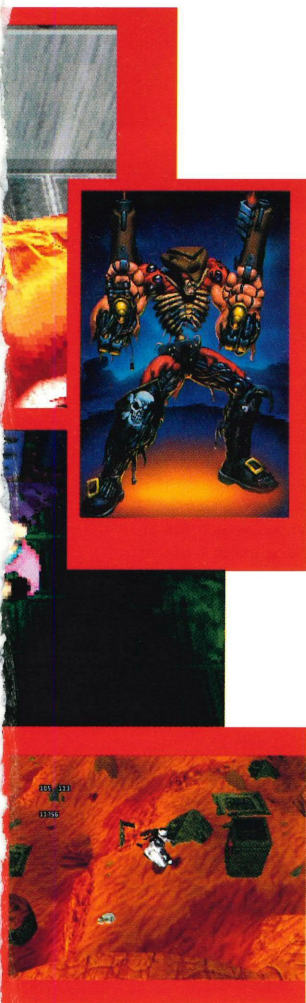
The PlayStation hadn't had anything remotely like it before and therefore the punters lapped up all this gore and trigger-pounding action, and made Gremlin a fair old wedge into the bargain. It was chuffed, the gamers were chuffed, the chaps at Sony were even chuffed, and so the inevitable happened – it spawned a sequel.

Now sequels in the game industry are fairly akin to those of Hollywood, in as far as the producers often think that a new and improved later model will mirror the initial response of the original. That, unfortunately, isn't always the case (just look at the never-ending Street Fighter series if you don't believe me) but thankfully, Gremlin seems to have pulled out all the stops on Loaded Part Deux and look set to quash criticism at every turn.

Everything has been overhauled. The graphics look better, the playing areas are much bigger, there are more bad guys, loads more pick-ups, plenty of bigger and better weapons, new playing modes and selectable features ensuring that ReLoaded isn't simply the old game with a big number 2 slapped on the end of it.

Just take a look at the screenshots here if you don't believe us. So, now it all hinges on whether you enjoyed the original so much that you're gonna rush out and buy this genuinely improved sequel. At least you've got a rough idea of what you're getting, but if you still fell unsure wait until next issue where we'll be giving you the full lowdown on ReLoaded in a massive review. Until then, get ready to reload.

Release Date: December 96



wipEout2097

Masterclass



with Bud Sputnik

All you wannabe space cadets can relax, Bud's here

to make sure you all get through your intense 2097 training and emerge as a fully-fledged G-force Commander at the end of it all. Prepare yourself for some hot tips on adrenaline-charged space craft, cool flying techniques, anti-gravity track descriptions plus the full low-down on all those cheeky hidden courses too



MINI REVIEW

● It's fast enough to satisfy the speed junkies, colourful enough to please the acid casualties and the soundtrack will have any self-respecting Chemical Brother shaking his booty until the early hours. wipEout2097 is an all over 21st century workout for the racing genre and its fans, involving numerous hidden bits and a gradual difficulty curve that'll allow most gamers a chance to discover the more in-depth sections of the game at a comfortable pace.

● Gameplay wise, it's better all round with easy to master controls, improved handling (thanks to the Air Brake facility) and plenty of improved visual effects that stop you in your tracks and make you sit up and beg for more. All the problems with the original have thankfully been sorted, leaving a more accessible game than you'd ever imagine.

● As I've said, the difficulty curve allows both experts and novices equal amounts of fun, which is a rare thing in next generation software. It's generally sexier than the original in almost every aspect, so if you like your fun fast, frantic and full of frenzied laser-firing space cadets, you could do a lot worse than pick up a copy of this.

CRAFTWORK:

Right, get to know the craft that best suits your style of play with the following informative points...



1) The FEISAR ship is the easiest craft to fly for beginners and experts alike. Although it is the slowest ship, it's very good on corners (it's blessed with a good turning circle) and has pretty good shield capability too. An all round girl mobile if you ask me.



2) AG Systems is a tad faster than the girlie FEISAR craft, but maintains the same cornering ability. However, the ship has a weak shield so you may find you have to make more trips into the pit lane than usual.



3) Auricom is the good all-round selectable craft of those on offer. It's slightly faster than the AG Systems ship, but more difficult to control on tight corners.



4) Ultimately you want to be flying the Qirex ship. It's much faster than the FEISAR offering, with better shield capability. The difficulty is in cornering, which is far less controllable than FEISAR's and it becomes very important to develop your skills with the Air Brakes as they are needed on most corners. When you perfect this baby, you're guaranteed a great sense of satisfaction. Hell yeah.

WEAPONS:

For those who missed last month's mag, here once more are those wonderful collectable weapons in full glorious detail...



Mines

These babies fall out from the back end of your craft and inflict plenty of damage on anyone

who's right up your arse. Beware though, they can be destroyed by Thunder Bombs.



E-Pak

This is sort of an on-board pit lane, when activated, it boosts your craft's energy shield by 25%. So if you're miles from a pit stop and you've got one of these knocking about – use it!



Autopilot

Fancy a hands off experience? Collect one of these and it'll guide you through a few seconds worth of track. Watch out for the DISENGAGING sign on-screen when it's about to run out.



Turbo Boost

Hit this when approaching one of the many ramps and you'll zip along the track like a man possessed. It works well on straights too, but avoid using it on corners at all costs.



Rockets

These fire in a group of three in a straight line from the front of your craft, so aim carefully if you

want to hit your target. Shoot slightly ahead of your intended target's flight path if he's approaching a bend.



Missiles

These have a lock-on heat seeking device which allows them to follow the target for a short while before hopefully connecting. You can also fire them backwards when the Rear Lock sign appears on-screen.



Electro Bolt

When these connect, they cause the craft to stall leaving it difficult to handle for a while. They also have the handy lock-on facility making it almost impossible to miss.



Thunder Bomb

Any craft on-screen when you let loose this beast will be heavily damaged. It's a sort of mini-nuclear explosion, producing a massive bang and a huge dome of light along the track.

Shield



As you'd imagine, the Shield icon puts a protective field around your craft for a short while, letting you receive direct hits and bump into walls without affecting energy level.

Plasma Bolt



Make contact with your opponent with one of these and he'll be eliminated from the race. They are a very rare pickup, so use it wisely. They need to be charged up before firing too.



Quake Disruptor

The most visually pleasing and most entertaining weapon around simply has to be this one. When activated, it sends an awesome wave of destruction hurtling around the track, knocking opponents everywhere.

GENERAL G-FORCE TIPS:

1) Autopilot: You may find that your autopilot will disengage on a tricky piece of track causing you to crash. If you use the DISCARD weapon button to disengage the Autopilot when on a nice piece of straight, you'll sail through without pranging your craft.



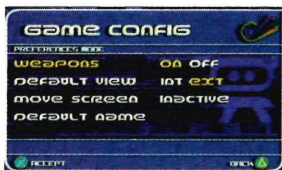
2) The Autopilot is a pretty intelligent old boy. If you activate it as you're approaching a pit lane, it will decide whether you need to go through it or not. Use this to your advantage as some pit lanes are quite tricky to enter and exit. Having an Autopilot at your disposal is very handy.

3) If you've been hit with an Electrobolt, do not activate the Autopilot! The intense energy from the Electrobolt attacks the ship's electrical systems causing it to short circuit. This means the Autopilot will fly at a very slow speed when hit. If you activate the Autopilot whilst being electrobolted, you have two choices: firstly, DISCARD the Autopilot or secondly, wait for the Electrobolt to wear off so that the Autopilot can function correctly.

4) If you have a Missile or Rocket pick-up, wait until you are quite close to the enemy before you fire. When you hit someone, they initially spin up in the air, so if you're quick and close enough you can fly underneath them.

5) Air Brakes: You must get to know the Air Brakes! If you are flying the FEISAR ship, you will discover you don't need to use them until you get to Rapier speed. Then they're a necessity.

6) Always keep your finger on the thrust button when air braking, otherwise you will slow down too much. Stab the Air Brake buttons rather than continuously pressing them on corners.

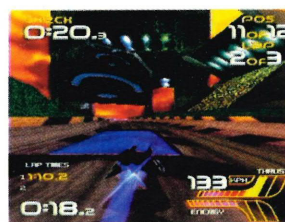


7) If you're having trouble with enemy fire and find it's a tad too difficult, simply switch the weapons OFF in the Preferences menu in the Options screen. Potentially though, this will make for a tougher challenge as you'll get better lap times with the weapons ON – simply because the Autopilots and Turbo Boost

pick-ups make all the difference

8) If you are racing close to an enemy ship on a bend, take the inside of the bend. That way if you knock into him, it will probably help you get yourself round the bend.

9) Always fly over the speed boost blue arrows on the circuits. They help a lot with overtaking



10) If a blue arrow is positioned at the start of a bend and looks tricky, don't avoid it – Air Brake into it and you'll slide round the bend like a dream.



11) Use the shield pickup if you're (A) Leading the race, (B) Low on shield energy or (C) The ship in front is about to drop some mines or fire a Missile backwards towards you. Otherwise, ditch them because, while they're active, you can't fire any weapons or use any other pick-ups.

12) Use the Up and Down directional buttons to raise and lower the craft's nose when in flight. Lowering the nose on a jump will gain you a little extra speed and raising the nose makes for a softer landing.

13) Always discard pick-ups you don't want. You will never pick up the same weapon twice in a row, by the way. Pick-ups have a waiting system and the weapon you collect depends on what position you are in the race. For example, when lagging behind, you're more likely to pick up Turbo Boosts and Autopilots and when ahead you're more likely to pick up Shields and Mines.

14) There is a special Emergency E-pak pick-up which restores shield energy. You will only have a chance of picking one of these up if your shield energy is less than

25 per cent. When you're desperate and one of these appears it will be a very welcome sight! There's a good chance of E-Paks appearing when you really need them, but it's up to you whether you rely on them or use the recharge pit lanes instead.

HINTS

There are a couple of other hints for the game that apply to all the different tracks. You need to remember that no matter how hard it seems, you can always get a perfect lap on any of these tracks and at what ever racing class you are playing at. Don't expect to get three perfect laps on Rapier or Phantom though. If you want to get anywhere on the game, there are a few of things to remember...

1) Only use the Air Brakes if you have to. They will slow you down – obviously – but especially when you're going up hill.

2) Learn to use all the different weapons at the correct times. If you want to get past another craft using a Missile, wait until you're quite close to him, so that it is travelling much slower when you go past it. If you don't, you'll find that the other craft will push you about or if it's slightly further behind you, all of a sudden you'll hear something like, "Missile", followed by a loud bang and by that time he's gone right past

3) 'Speed Ups' don't work very well on corners. If you like crashing, go ahead, otherwise try and use them only on the straight stretches. It's advisable not to use them on the Rapier and Phantom tracks, as you will find yourself meeting a wall as you overload on adrenaline from trying to control the craft at warp factor ten. There are some places you can use the Turbo Boost and get away with it at the same time as knocking a second or two off your lap time, but I'll let you find those yourself. Just take my word for it, even in Phantom class, you can do this with a very high success rate at certain points on the tracks.

4) If your decide to use a Quake Disruptor, it's advisable not to do it immediately afterwards using a Turbo Boost. You'll be travelling along the track with the equivalent of a brick wall just ahead of you until the Quake Disruptor ends its destructive cycle. ►

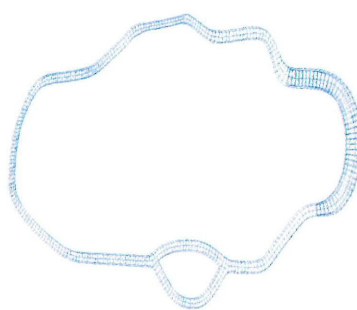
► Enough of all that. How do you complete the tracks at their allocated racing class? Read on my lovelies...

VECTOR TRACKS

Vector is the easiest racing class and you shouldn't need to use the Air Brakes at all. When you first have a go, it's a good idea to use the FEISAR craft, as you'll spend most of your time accelerating away from the barrier you just ran into and this has the best acceleration.

NO.1: TALONS REACH

Location: Canada
Length: 3.2 km
Height: 74 meters



Start on the right of the track and stay on the right for the slight left then right bend, so you can go over the first Speed Up arrow. Once you've got there, switch sides and go over the Speed Up and Weapon Grid on the left hand side of the track. When you go round the next right hand bend, move over to the right side of the track to go over

the Weapon Grid where the bend sharpens.

Time it right and you'll be able to go round the bend without using the Air Brakes and still get a weapon. Stay on the right of the track for the double Speed Ups across the track so you can go over the following



Speed Up and Weapon Grid on that side. Continue on the right and go over the next Weapon Grid at the end of the left to right bend that goes over the hill, but make sure you then move to the left for the double Speed Up on that side. You've now halfway round the track. There's a right to left bend

which you should come out of on the left of the track for the Speed Up, not on the right for the Weapon Grid. The next bend swings right to left into a long right hand bend – stay on the right hand side to go over the right Weapon Grid in the middle of this bend. When the track swings to the left, stay on the left to go over the next Weapon Grid, then move to the right for the right hand bend that has a Speed Up on the right side of the track.

You can now choose to go left or right. I would advise going right into the pit lane so your shields are on maximum, but which ever way you go, the turning is easy. If you find you have to use the Air Brakes, then you're not up to scratch to move on. That's quite sad really, as this track is as slow as a slug.

NO.2: SAGARMATHA

Location: Nepal
Length: 4.3 km
Height: 153 meters

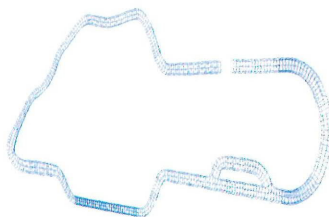
This track starts with a nice straight stretch. Stay on the right of the track and go over the Speed Up. Stay to the right for the left hand bend and go over the Weapon Grid, but when



the track bends to the left into the tunnel, move to the left side of the track as there's a double Speed Up just inside that you want to go over. Continue through the tunnel with your craft on the left hand side of the

track for the right to left bend immediately after the tunnel, go over the Speed Up on the left instead of the Weapon Grid on the right.

You'll come to a rising bend to the right, get on the left hand side of the track when you get to the end for the Speed Up. Then move straight over to the right for the Weapon



Grid. If you get this right, you'll then be able to go straight through the slight right to left bend that is next and then swing to the left for the Speed Up just after the bend.

When you go through the tunnel with the right hand bend, stay to the left and go over another Speed Up and not the Weapon Grid next to it. Continue on the left of the track for the slight left followed by the sharper right so you can go over the Weapon Grid.

On the following left hand bend, turn left to move over to the right of the track and you'll go over a double Speed Up leading to a ramp for a jump. At the top of the ramp is a couple of Speed Ups across the track. When you hit these, you'll Speed Up considerably and pass over some Weapon Grids on the other side

Don't worry about speed for the right hand bend that follows though. It might be quite sharp, but it's not that bad. Stay on the right as you come out of this tunnel as there's a Weapon Grid ahead, but after that move over to the left of the track. You'll then go into the next tunnel that ends with a double Speed Up on the left.

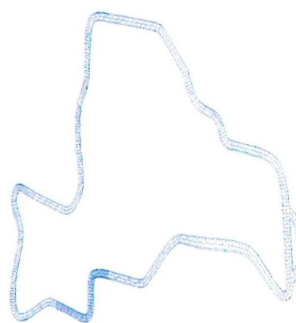
If you want to go into the pit lane, turn right just before reaching the double Speed Up or you'll miss the pit lane. As soon as you see you're heading down the centre of the pit lane entrance, turn left so you don't crash. Coming out of the pit lane is an easy left to right bend leading to the starting line. If you don't go into the pit lane, you've no problems as it's a straight run through to the starting line.

VENOM TRACKS

These tracks are a bit tricky, but you're still being eased into the ships controls. It's now time to choose the craft you want to win with. This is where it starts to get fun...

NO.3: VALPARAISO

Location: Chile
Length: 3.9 km
Height: 220 meters



You'll start on the right, but get on to the left for the left hand bend allowing you to go over the Speed Up on the left after the starting line. You then come to a stretch of track that twists like a snake. Come out of the first right hand bend on the right of the track for the Weapon Grid and just before you go over the Weapon Grid turn left. You'll still get a weapon but need to be on the left for the bend, to go over the Speed Up.

Again, just before you go over this, turn to the right for the right hand bend, so you go over the next Speed Up. Repeat this procedure for the following right and left bend, then stay on the left for the following Speed Up. Next up is another left hand bend, move over and stay on the to the right. You'll go over the Weapon Grids and Speed Ups that are across the track, continue on the right side of the straight until you go over the Speed Ups across the track.



Once over the Speed Ups, turn left for the left hand bend, you won't need the Air Brakes here. Now move over to the left of the track for the Weapon Grid on that side just past the gentle right hand bend. Let your craft drift back to the right over the three bumps, but as you approach the Weapon Grid, turn towards the left to face the Speed Up. As soon as you're on the Weapon Grid, turn right.

Swing over the track to the Speed Up before the right hand motion takes effect. Get on to the right during the right hand bend and stay on that side for the double Speed Up on the right, just after the bend. Immediately before you come out of the tunnel turn left for the approaching left hand bend, making sure you keep on left, or you'll crash. If you do this, again you won't need the Air Brakes.

As soon as you're heading straight for the Speed Up on the right of the track, turn gently to the right for the right hand bend so you come out of it and are able to go over the Weapon Grid. You should find that if you

haven't crashed you're lined up for the triple Speed Up on the left of the track.

The next corner is the first one you will find tricky, no matter how long you've been playing the game, so I suggest using the Air Brakes to get you through. After going over the triple Speed Up you'll be travelling fast, as soon as you go into the tunnel press left, and left Air Brake until you are facing the right way along the track after the bend. Then go over a Speed Up followed shortly by Weapon Grids across the track.

Stay on the left of the track for the next Speed Up, as soon as you reach it, turn to the right for this bend and keep turning so you're on the right of the track for the following Speed Up just inside the tunnel. Don't try and get to the Weapon Grid as you'll crash on the left hand bend. Stay on the right and as you approach the Weapon Grid, turn left. You may not go over the Speed Up in the tunnel, but as soon as you are over it or next to it, turn right, so that you come out of this bend on the left of the track.

It's possible to swing over to the right for the next Speed Up, but easier to stay on the left for the Weapon Grid next to it and you need to come out of the following left hand bend on the left for that Speed Up anyway. Move over to the right for the right hand bend to go over the double Speed Up which will hurl you into the air for the following right hand bend. Don't worry about being airborne, just get onto the right of the "sky" so when you land you can approach the really sharp left on the right of the track.

Before reaching the sign with a white arrow pointing South East, turn left with left Air Brake. As soon as your back end starts swinging round, release the Air Brake but continue turning and if you're going straight on, you'll be lined up for the double Speed Up on the left. If you're turning right in to the pit lane you'll need to take this a bit differently.

As soon as your back end has swung round the corner, turn right and change to the right Air Brake. You won't need to turn right much before you've lined up with the entrance to the pit lane. Then you just have to come out of the other side via a gentle left to right bend to come to the starting line. Thank God.

NO.4: PHENITIA PARK

Location: Germany
Length: 3.8 km
Height: 137 meters

As soon as you come to the left hand bend, take it so you come out on the left of the track in order to go over the Weapon Grid. On the Weapon Grid, turn right for the right hand bend so you go over the double Speed Ups on the right of the track. This leads to a jump that has Speed Ups across the track on the other side leading to a long left hand bend.

Stay on the right of the track for this bend to go over the Weapon Grid on the right. As you come out of the bend, move over to the left for the double Speed Ups on the left hand side. For the left to right bend, just tap left as you come towards it and right as you leave it. The next bend is a hard right, therefore just before you reach it turn right with the right Air Brake on.

As soon as you are heading straight, change to turn left with left Air Brake on full for the left hand bend. If you get this right you'll go over the Speed Up on the left side of the track and have a straight run at the following jump.

Go over the Weapon Grids across the track and into a right hand bend that changes to a left hand bend at the same time as crossing the first mid lap check point. Confused? You will be. As you go over the check point, make sure you are on the left of

the track for the Speed Up. For the following right bend, stay to the right so you go over the Speed Up on the right hand side of the track.

When you turn left on the approach to the jump, move to the left of the track. When you're about to land, turn right for the right bend and get on to the right hand side of the track for the Speed Up. Now move back to the left of the track for the left hand bend and the Weapon Grid. As



the track bends to the left in the tunnel move to the right for the double Speed Up. Keep turning left for the following Speed Up on the left of the track at the end of the tunnel.

On the following straight move over to the right as you cross the second mid lap check point to go over the Speed Up on the right. Just before reaching the fast approaching right hand bend, turn left using the left Air Brake. As soon as you're travelling sideways, stop pressing left and you'll skid around the bend. For the following sharp left do exactly the same using the right buttons, and as soon as you're facing the Speed Up, release all buttons except accelerate and travel over the Speed Up.

For the tunnel, move to the left of the track, when you go over the Speed Ups across the track turn to the right, then turn gently to the left. You'll come out of the tunnel on the left hand side of the track. Go over the Speed Up and Weapon Grid on the left, don't even turn for the slight left hand bend after them. As soon as you pass the left bend press left and the left Air Brake to stay on the track, or right and right Air Brake to go into the pit lane.

After entering the pit lane press left to stop from crashing into the wall. When you come to the left to right bend out of the pits, it's easiest to tap left and left Air Brake, then right and right Air Brake to join the track leading to the starting line. However, if you don't go into the pit lane, follow the left side of the track so you go over the double Speed Ups on that side. As soon as you're over those, tap right and the right Air Brake.

This will make you go over the Weapon Grid on the left side of the small right bend. As soon as the ship starts to turn right, tap right and hit the right Air Brake to straighten up on the track again and you're back to the starting line.

RAPIER TRACKS

These tracks are well hard. You'll have to practice them quite a bit to get the hang of them – even if you're using this players guide. The speeds on these will have your head spinning sideways, especially from the interior viewpoint. Yes, it's time to separate the men from the boys!

NO.5: GARE D' EUROPA

Location: France
Length: 3.5 km
Height: 179 meters

This track starts with a nice long straight stretch which ends with a sharp right hand bend. It's possible to take this bend without using the Air Brakes by approaching it down the middle of the track and turning right as you go over the starting line. When you come out of the bend, there's a Speed Up on the left and a Weapon Grid on the right. Go over the Speed Up. For the following left hand bend, come out on the right of the track for the Speed Up on that side of the short straight part of the track.

On the right hand bend, turn in late to go over the Weapon Grid, but not too much as you want to come across the track and then go over the double Speed Ups on the left. This will make turning into the following left hand bend a lot easier. Come out of this bend on the right hand side of the track for the double Speed Ups on the right at the base of the hill. Getting these Speed Ups mean you won't slow down too much when going up the hill.

As you go up the hill, move to the left for the Speed Up on the brow of the hill. Just before it though, press left. Once over the hill, you'll go over a Weapon Grid on the right hand side of the track. Stay in the middle of the track and then as you come to the Speed Up on the right, press right, and hit the right ▶



► Air Brake until you're facing down the tunnel. Through the tunnel, stay in the middle of the track and just before you come out of the tunnel, turn right for the bend, then immediately press left to get back over to the two double Speed Ups on the left hand side of the track, on the down slope.

At the bottom of this slope the tracks bends from left to right to left to right to left, with a Speed Up, and Weapon Grid immediately after it on the right hand side of the track. When you come to the first bend of this section of track, you'll see you can actually travel in a straight line down the middle and ignore all the bends.

Doing that though isn't easy, you'll need to keep the nose of the craft up at the same time as avoiding the walls, but it can be done with practice. When you come out of the bends you'll be heading for the Speed Up and Weapon Grid. Approaching the Speed Up, straighten up with the track and at the next bend (to the right) turn right and tap the right Air Brake.

Keep on turning to the right and you should be able to go over the Weapon Grid on the far end of the bend. When you approach the left hand bend, press left and the left Air Brake until you're round the bend and facing the Speed Up ahead. Immediately after, when lined up with the Speed Up, press right and hit the right Air Brake, but only very quickly.

Check where you are facing, then press right and the right Air Brake to swing yourself round this right hand bend. For the following left hand bend you don't need to use the Air Brakes much, just tap left and the left Air Brake as you approach it.

As you start to turn, release the Air Brake but keep your finger on the left control button. As you come round the bend head for the double Speed Ups on the right side of the track and when on it, move to the left side of the track for the Weapon Grid just ahead on this straight stretch of track.

At the end of the straight, get on the left side of the track. Just before the bend a patch of the track is in darkness. Making sure that you're on the left side of the track when you reach this dark patch of track, press right and keep your finger on right. If you get round the first section of the bend, but feel like you're going to hit the right hand wall before getting round the second part of the track, quickly release from turning right, then resume.

You will come out of the bend on the left side of the track, and go over a Speed Up on that side. Move to the centre of the track making sure you're travelling straight down the middle. Press up, and keep that finger on it all the way along these rises. When reach the great big jump, get on the right of the track if hitting the pits is on your mind, or go to the left of the track if soldiering on.

To go into the pit lane, take the jump on the right of the track and when parallel to the Speed Up, tap left and prod the left Air Brake. When entering the pit lane, press right virtually straight after you enter, then at the end of the pits press right and the right Air Brake and then left with left Air Brake to get back onto the track and heading for the Start line.

Exiting the pit lane is difficult and you'll find yourself crashing on the way out frequently, but it is possible. If you're going straight on, take the jump on the left of the track so you'll go over the Speed Up. Now carry on straight to the Starting line.

NO.6: ODESSA KEYS

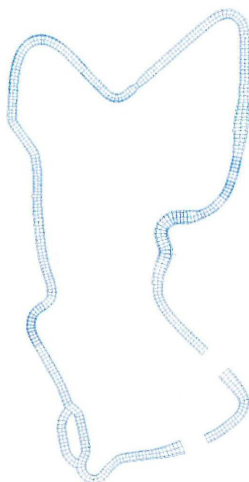
Location: Black Sea

Length: 4.4 km

Height: 121 meters

Right from the off, turn slightly left to get through the left hand bend, then turn slightly right to straighten up the craft. Move to the left of the track for the Speed Up on that side and press right and the right Air Brake for the right hand bend. Immediately afterwards, press left, and the left Air Brake for the left hand bend. Be sure to continue turning out of the bend to go over the Speed Ups and Weapon Grid on the left side of the track.

Press right and hit the right Air Brake quickly when you're on the first Speed Up on the left, followed by a quick left and



left Air Brake, you will get on to the right hand Speed Ups as well and be heading straight up the hill in no time. Try to stay in the middle of the track for the down hill section, then as you approach the left hand bend, turn left. Now use the right, and right Air Brake so you don't crash on the right

hand bend. Try and be in the middle of the track or the left of the track when you come out of this bend.

When approaching the Weapon Grid and Speed Up across the track, press up so you don't lose too much speed on this steep hill. You can get round the right hand bend without using the Air Brakes. Stay on the left for the bend so you can go over the double Speed Ups on that side. Now shift to the right, for the Speed Up.

Just before you go over this Speed Up, press left and the left Air Brake whilst trying to stay on the right hand side of the track, so you can go over the Weapon Grid. If a move to the left is done quickly enough, you can also go over the double Speed Ups.

Continue up the hill on the left and just before reaching the Speed Up on the right, press right and the right Air Brake to get around the sharp right hand bend. Ensure you get on to the left of the track for the Speed Up ahead. Just before, press right and then left to go over the Weapon Grid on the right side of the track. Then you come to the tunnel that turns right with double Speed Ups across the track. When you're on it, turn right.

As you approach the left hand bend, press left and hit the left Air Brake, followed by a tap to the right and one for the right Air Brake for the following right hand bend out of the tunnel. In doing so you will go over the Weapon Grid on the bend. Just press left for the left hand bend and line yourself up for the double Speed Ups on the left hand side of the track. Take off on the jump on the left to go over the Weapon Grid on the other side of the jump.

Halfway between the Weapon Grid on the left and the Weapon Grid on the right, press right and the right Air Brake for the right hand bend. You'll go over the right hand Weapon Grid as well. Take off from the next jump from the left and continue on this side until you reach the Speed Up. Press left and the left Air Brake. Straight after press right and hit the right Air Brake to get you and the craft round the right hand bend ahead.

To go into the pits, press right and then left so you don't crash. As you come to the right bend to exit the pit lane, approach it on the left. Press right then left, and hit the left Air Brake – you're now heading for the starting line. If you don't want to go into the pits, follow the right and right Air Brake movement, with the left and left Air Brake. Then angle your way through the slight left then right bend, and you're back at the start.

HIDDEN TRACKS:

Collect Gold Awards on all six tracks and progress through the various racing classes and be set a challenge game. This is basically a race around all six tracks again, but this time the difficulty level has been upped to maximum Rapier class. Receive Gold Awards in all of these (just like you did before) and you'll get the chance to race on the toughest circuits around in the hardest racing class there is – Phantom Class!

THOSE PHANTOM TRACKS IN FULL...

These are the fastest tracks available and they'll annoy you for quite a long time, but once you get the hang of them you'll find them the most enjoyable. These are definitely for all you adrenaline junkies out there. When you get to grips with them you'll feel like a king and have the reactions of a Ninja to boot.

NO.7: VOSTOK ISLAND

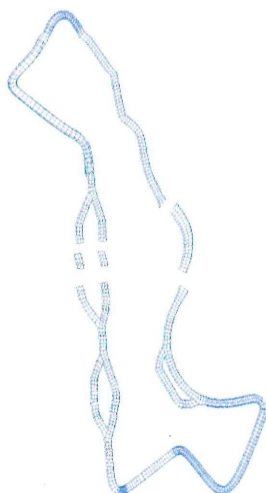
Location: South Pacific

Length: 5.1 km

Height: 97 meters

As you go in to the first tunnel, get on the left side of the track. Just before entering this tunnel, press right and the right Air Brake, releasing it just before getting round the bend. Try to go over the Speed Up on the left side of the track and then turn right for the right hand





fork. Now turn left and continue over the Speed Up across the track. When the track joins again, angle across the Speed Ups and the Weapon Grid so you head towards the left hand fork.

Turn right for the bend leading to the double jump whilst staying in the centre of the track. Take the small right hand bend on the left the track and go over the Weapon Grid and the Speed Up. Turn left for the following bend, moving towards the left for the triple Speed Ups at the start of the rising left hand bend. When you reach the top of the hill, turn right with the Air Brake to go over the Weapon Grid on the left side of the right side.

Straighten up for the approaching right hand bend in the tunnel and as you enter, press right and the right Air Brake, so you take off the ramp in the middle

of the track. Move over to the right of the track now and as you reach the Speed Up, press right, then left for the Speed Up on the left hand side of the track. As you cross it, press left and the left Air Brake followed by right and the right Air Brake. This will take you to the mid lap check point.

Straight after, press left making sure you're on the right side of the track to go over the Speed Up. After landing, press right to go round the bend and over the two Weapon Grids across the track. When you take off the next jump you'll find you can now go left along the track or right into the pit lane. Which ever way you decide, you need to head towards the double Speed Ups on the left.

If you want the pit lane, just before you reach the double Speed Ups press right and the right Air Brake followed immediately by a tap to the left. To come out of the pit lane simply press left to line up with the Speed Up across the track in the entrance to the tunnel. To stay with the track, press left as you're over the double Speed Ups on the left side of the track.

Keep tapping left and go over the Weapon Grid and turn left into the tunnel and over the Speed Up across the track. Now get onto the left side and before the right hand bend arrives, turn right using the right Air Brake. Keep them on so that you head towards the Weapon Grid on the right side. Move over to the left side of the track for the next right hand bend though.

This can be done without using the Air Brakes. Just turn as if it was an easy bend and move to the right side of the track as you come out of it. Go over the double Speed Ups on the right and press left and the left Air Brake for the left hand bend out of the tunnel. Doing this means you can go over the Weapon Grid and Speed Ups on the left side. Carry straight along the left side of the track and just before the tunnel with the sharp right hand bend, press right and the right Air Brake. You're at the start again. Hopefully.

NO.8: SPILSKINANKE

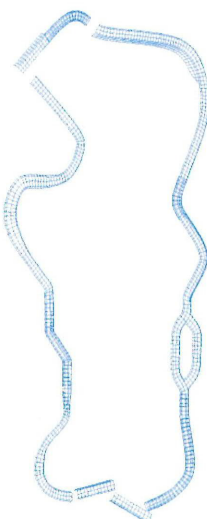
Location: North America

Length: 4.0 km

Height: 82 meters

Stay on the left as you begin this race, that way the first turn to the right won't need the use of the Air Brakes. Turn right about two ships lengths before the starting line and come out of the bend on the right (if you want to risk this for a weapon grid), then swing to the left side of the track for the Speed Up. Move to the right during the slight right hand bend for the double Speed Ups. As you go over this, move left for the Speed Ups and the ever handy Weapon Grid.

On reaching the first Speed Up, press left and the left Air Brake for the bend through the tunnel. Remain on the left for the Speed Up on that side. As soon as you can see the



Weapon Grid on the right of the track at the brow of the hill, press right and the right Air Brake for the bend. Move to the left again for the Speed Up.

If you want to go in to the pits, press left and the left Air Brake as you go over the Speed Up until you are lined up with the entrance of the pit lane. As you reach the start of the pit lane, press right and the right Air Brake, then gently press right to line up with the pit lane exit. As you come to the exit, press left and the left Air Brake to go over the double Speed Ups in the entrance to the tunnel on the left side of the track.

Hit left as you go over the double Speed Ups and then straight away press right to get round the right hand bend, at all times making sure you stay on the left of the track. As you go over the Weapon Grid before the jump, turn right so you travel along the track. As soon as you touch down on the track though, press left to jump to the next section of track. You'll land on this facing forward instead of a wall – if you've done it right.

As you go over the next jump, make sure you're on the left side of the track and press right. Keep your finger on right for this bend after the jump or you'll simply crash. Stay on the left of the track to go over the Speed Up and the Weapon Grid. As you reach the Speed Up, press left and just touch the Air Brake to get round the left hand bend. Press left and the left Air Brake for the small left hand drop. Press right and the right Air Brake for the small right hand drop.

Press left and the left Air Brake for the small left hand drop and try to come out of this bend on the left side to go over the Weapon Grid on the left side of the track. For the following long swinging right hand turn, approach it from the right side in order to go over the two double Speed Ups on the right side of the track. As you come out of the bend, just move over to the left side. That way you'll go over the Speed Up and the Weapon Grid on the left.

When hitting the Speed Up, press left and touch the left Air Brake twice to get round this bend. As you come out of it, move over to the left side for the Weapon Grid. Stay on this side for the approach to the jump and as you come to the end of the track press right and the right Air Brake to land facing the correct way.

As you go over the Speed Up across the track, turn right until you've gone over the Weapon Grid across the track. Then press left so to line up with the starting grid and move to the left side of the track. Stay on this side until you see the starting line, press right and you've just completed wipEout2097. What a great feeling it is.

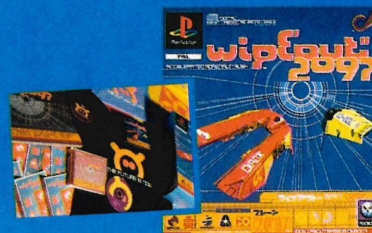
So there you have it, wipEout2097 100 per cent completely sorted. Turn the page for 10 Ways To Win At... Twisted Metal, plus another 10 Ways To Win... this time with the cheeky Crash Bandicoot. You've never had it so good have you?

LOOK AT THE SIZE OF THAT PACKAGING!

Many thanks to the boys at Psynopsis for the above guide, plus for giving us this cool competition too. On offer we have five massive – and I mean massive – wipEout2097 promotion packs to giveaway. Each one contains a copy of the game, a pack of stickers, one can of Red Bull, an exclusive wipEout2097 T shirt and finally a copy of the game soundtrack which features the likes of The Prodigy, Fluke, The Chemical Brothers and many more besides. So, how do you get your hands on all this booty? It's quite simple really, all you have to do is answer the piss-easy question below and get your entry to us before the 1st of January. Send it to our usual address, marking your entry clearly with the words "Compo 2097". Right then, the question...

Name the spiky haired troll bloke out of the Prodigy.

- Is it...
- A) Keith Flint
 - B) Charlie Blimp
 - C) Benny Dimp



COMPETITION

10 ways to win at Crash Bandicoot

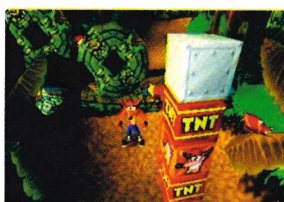
Finding your feet in this excellent platform adventure can be a frustrating affair, what with all those tricky sections, annoying enemies and numerous other irritating touches throughout. There's a hefty players' guide starting next issue but here's something to whet your appetite in the meantime...

MINI REVIEW

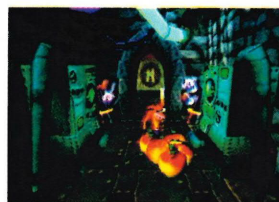
- Crash is a corker! Not since Mario made his debut have I been so entranced to the screen, finding myself desperately battling my way through the many levels of frolics and fun, frantically tugging on God's shirt sleeves begging for a save point so I can continue further.

- The whole multi-coloured caboodle is one massive melting pot of humour, eye pleasing graphics, addictive gameplay, absorbing puzzles, 3D mayhem, chance, trial and error and good old fashioned entertainment. Each varying boss level requires thought, skill and plenty of patience, whereas the main bulk of levels swing wildly from one viewpoint to another throwing overhead, first-person, side-on and other crazy angles into your face stunning you into submission purely by how amazing it all is.

- It's been highly polished and it shows, and to be truthful I can't really see Rayman 2 or Cheesy Returns worrying the chaps at Naughty Dog much. If you're a fan of the genre, the fact is that you're not going to get anything remotely near as good as Crash on your machine for a long time to come, so buy it.



DYNAMITE DISASTERS! Remember to be extra careful around the red crates carrying the TNT logo



APPLES FOR ALL! No matter how full you feel, keep on eating those apples if you want to survive

1 TAKE YOUR TIME!

Yes, it's all well and good tearing through the levels like an amphetamine-charged cheetah but you'll only end up losing those precious lives and having to start all over again. Chill out while playing and have a look around before you start to move on because certain jumps need to be timed to perfection and leaping into the unknown is a sure fire route to failure.

2 FIND THE SECRETS!

There are plenty of hidden bits to discover throughout the game (such as bonus boxes, elevating platforms and the ability to hop over fences in some of the later levels) so take a few seconds breather during play and try and spot some of the more less obvious extras. Additional lives and the ever-handy Unga Bunga Bloke boxes can often be found in the most unlikely places, so hunt them out!

3 APPLES FOR ALL!

As you know, most of wooden boxes contain apples. You need to collect these *en route*, although after a while you'll find yourself not bothering with all of them and whizzing past the majority. It's a common occurrence. Once you pick up 100 though, you'll get an extra life, and you do need to collect as many additional lives as possible in order to complete the game with relative ease. So, in a nutshell, don't ignore the boxes! Oh yeah, another thing; the ones with the vertical slats contain 10 apples, but only if you bounce on top of them. Spinning into them will get you nothing.

4 DYNAMITE DISASTERS!

Another set of boxes that require thought and patience are the TNT boxes. Hop onto these babies



and you'll trigger the detonator, giving you three seconds to get clear of the blast. That's all well and good as most of the time you won't bother going anywhere near them, but on certain occasions there'll be tempting extra lives or apple crates lurking nearby these naughty TNT delights. My advice is to avoid them. No matter how tempted you are to spin mid-air and try and break the extra life box that's lying sandwiched between two TNT boxes, don't. 99% of the time you'll end up dead for trying, so don't bother. Just walk on by...

5 RESTART!

Yes, even the toughest games player knows when to call it a day and reset the machine. But this is a tactical approach as opposed to a cowardly move, as re-doing the earlier levels can furnish you with an abundance of lives for the later and more trickier levels. A wise move when you think about it. So have a play about and get your bearings and then when things hot up, simply reset the game and romp with ease through those early sections, collecting as many lives and apples as possible as you go.

6 TURTLES HEAD!

One of the many annoying enemies you'll encounter along the way to Dr Cortex's mansion are the turtles. More often than not, they'll just plod around the levels getting in your way and are best dispersed with your handy bandicoot spin. But - and this is a big but - don't spin into them on the later levels! The High Road level is a perfect example of why not to, as you need the turtles in order to finish the level. Hop onto their backs and they'll die, but they'll flip over onto their shells as they do so. This leaves the empty shells free for you to

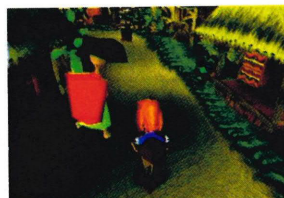
bounce off their backs further into the level, or alternatively, reach boxes suspended in mid-air.

7 BONUS BEAUTY!

Collect three of the Tawna icons and you'll be whisked off to the bonus section of the game. Once you arrive, you'll have to make your way across to the right of the screen in order to save progress. This is no mean feat. If you die during the bonus round you'll lose the chance to save the game and another opportunity won't come around for quite a while, so it's vastly important that you succeed. Take your time and slowly progress along the level, while at all times avoiding the TNT boxes. The bonus levels are never the same twice though, so on certain ones you'll have to brave the TNT with a well timed bounce as well as hopping over sizeable gaps and other obstructing crates. More often than not you'll need to do several consecutive bounces onto the crates in order to get to the end. This is tricky to say the least, so be careful and watch your step at all times!

8 PYGMY PROBLEMS!

Another bunch of annoying enemies you'll meet are the Pygmies. Most of the ones in the earlier levels just waddle about from side to side, although later on in the standard side-view platform levels they provide a whole new problem. This time they're carrying a shield of some sort and will try to push you off platforms with a hefty shove. To conquer this minor niggle, all you have to do is time a pixel perfect jump onto their heads which, if done correctly, will result in them placing their shields on their heads instead of in your face. Now all



PYGMY PROBLEMS! The little jungle munchkins can be a pain at times

RESTART! Check out the map to see where the easier levels were. Then go back

PASSWORD! Unless you've got a Memory Card handy, take note of all passwords



TURTLES HEAD! Don't kill these! Hop on their head and jump off their backs!



you have to do is hop over them, or alternatively, use them as a ladder to reach higher platforms or levitating boxes. Simple stuff really.

9 PASSWORD PREDICAMENTS!

If you don't own a Memory Card, discovering passwords for the game is a God send, so don't forget to make a note of each one you come across during play. We've got all the passwords to

the entire game sitting right here in our office, but of course we can't hand them out willy-nilly. We can let you have a couple to be getting on with though and there'll be loads more next month to coincide with our players' guide. So until then try these beauties out for size:

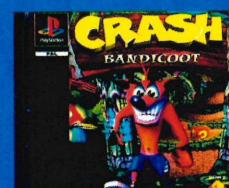
□, □, X, □, □, ▲, X, ▲.

Or perhaps
●, □, ●, □, ●, ●, ▲, □.

And finally,
●, X, □, ▲, ●, □, □, ▲.

10 FREE STUFF!

The last way to win at Crash Bandicoot isn't strictly a cheat, hint or tip. It's a competition actually, and a good one at that. The good old boys at Sony HQ have kindly donated several copies of the game, as well as a similar number of exclusive Crash T shirts, a handful of demo discs and a massive first prize in the form of a superb Sony MHC801 supersonic Hi-Fi stack system (currently retailing at around £400) that will no doubt annoy your neighbours and impress your mates and the chicks in equal amounts. Probably. Anyway, all



you have to do to scoop first prize (or perhaps one of the several runners-up goody bags) is answer this tricky Crash query: Name the development team behind Crash Bandicoot. Was it...

A) Naughty Dog?

B) Happy Puppy?

C) Cheeky Monkey?

Send your answers on a postcard to the usual address, and make sure you mark them clearly with the word "BANDICOOT". Cheers.



COMPETITION

20 ways to win at Twisted Metal

Sony's dangerous driving combat game requires skill, strategy and subterfuge. All three qualities can now be yours in abundance, free of charge courtesy of PlayStation Pro



MINI REVIEW

● Taking control of one of 12 vehicles armed to the hilt with machine gun rounds, you career around six different zones avoiding unfriendly fire and picking off other vehicles with the ultimate aim of wiping them out. As if skidding around corners and pulling off 360 degree turns isn't enough, there are ramps for extra stuntworthiness and the option to knock over and splatter the tramps hanging around on street corners

● The six levels vary from freeways to rooftops and look the part in every way. A radar of sorts displays your position in relation to that of your adversaries and limited regeneration ramps reduce some of the damage you'll sustain. The best feature of Twisted Metal however, is the two player split-screen duel where you can take on a mate

● As a concept, Twisted Metal is good. A rough and ready driving game with missiles, original vehicles, no defined track and where a little bit of strategy can work wonders, sounds excellent. Visually speaking it's no great shakes but if anything, the abrasive graphic feel adds to the high-speed destruction action

1 PASSWORDS FOR DIFFERENT LEVELS

Level two Warehouse

●, ▲, □, ●, ●

Level three Freeway

X, □, □, ●, ▲

Level four River Park Rumble

X, ▲, □, ●, □

Level five Cyurbia

X, □, ▲, ▲, ▲

Level six Rooftop

□, ▲, X, ●, X

2 FIGHT FOR YOUR LIFE

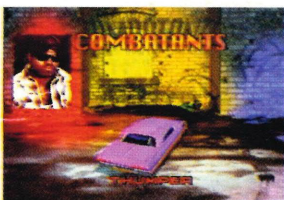
□, ●, ●, □, □

You will now fight five cars in the arena

3 HELICOPTER VIEW

●, ●, ●, ▲, X, space

then choose view (start, up) when racing in the arena or on the rooftop only



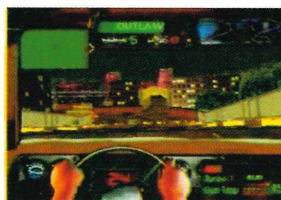
THUMPER One of the niftiest vehicles in Twisted Metal

4 ADAM ANT STUNT

On rooftop level shoot the pyramid on top of first building to gain access to a hotel lobby and get to crash through a picture window as seen on the Stand And Deliver video

5 STRATEGY TIP

There is a hiding place on the Cyurbia level situated in the canal. In the outside corners, you should see a platform with a hedge on top of it. Position yourself on top of the ledge, hidden behind the hedge. The other cars will drive over to where you are, but they can't get you (everyone apart from Spector, that is). Eventually (this does take quite a long time), the other cars will start to severely damage and possibly end up destroying each other



IN-CAR VIEW The worst aspect of Twisted Metal. Totally spurious

6 POWER-UP BOX

On the Rooftop level there's a crane holding a red box. Position yourself on the top of one of the buildings (there is one that faces the box at eye-level) and shoot the box. It will fall onto the roof below. When you blow it up you will find there are three power-ups inside

7 REINSTATEMENT OF ENERGY AND WEAPONS

Immediately after beating the three cars on the final rooftop level, quickly drive your car off the edge. While your car is falling, the announcement of the fight with Minion will appear and you will be put back up on the roof with full energy and all the weapons you previously had

8 USEFUL CODES

Inulnerability

□, ▲, X, Space, ●

Infinite Weapons

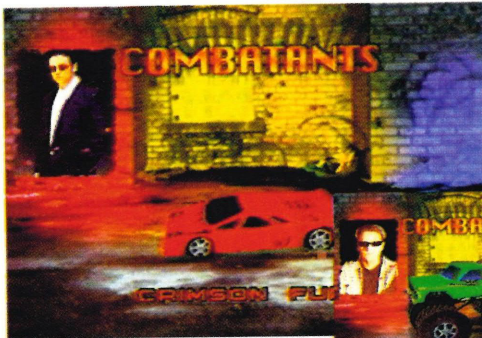
▲, Space, □, ●, ●

Fight Minion

▲, X, ●, □, ▲

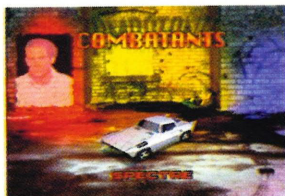
9 POWER MISSILES

On the Cyurbia stage, drive into the front of the Big J store and you'll get power missiles

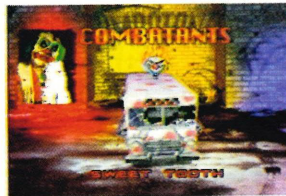


CRIMSON FURY A smooth David Wicks style driver. Is he gay in real life?

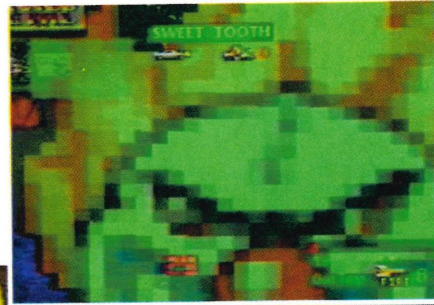
HAMMERHEAD We must have a monster truck!



SPECTRE A wicked fifties-style souped up long-bonnet job



SWEET TOOTH Anything driven by a clown has to be dangerous



EXTREME CLOSE-UP You don't scare me, gingivitis boy

BANG! If Sweet tooth hammers into you, the last thing on your mind's candy floss



10 ENTER THE HOTEL LOBBY

To enter the hotel lobby on the rooftop stage, drive to the side of the pyramid facing the satellite dish and the ramp to the next building and back into it. This saves time when being you are being shot at and need energy. Doesn't work with Darkside, Hammerhead or Warthog

11 TWO SETS OF HOMERS

In Cyurbia, in the Reservoir, one of the outside corner gates can be smashed open to reveal two sets of homing missiles and a dark hiding spot

12 PLAY AS MINION

Enter this sequence of pad directions at the title screen, while the fire burst appears
 ↑, →, ↓, ↓, ←, ↑, ↓
 This is very hard and must be done quickly. You will hear Yellowjacket's voice saying 'Yeah' if you have done it correctly. Alternatively, win 100 games in the versus battle with first player as Darkside and second as Hammerhead - this must be done on Arena or Warehouse levels. Or even select the tank, then go to the password screen and put in the following
 □, ▲, ▲, space, □,

13 SEE THROUGH WALLS!

In the warehouse district in two player mode there is a huge orange dumpster on the side street. Blow it up and a charging

station appears. If you position your car just right you can see through walls

14 SECRET PASSAGE

On the warehouse level, drive around the outer edges of the city. You should find a secret passageway through the buildings

15 HOMING POWER-UP

In two player mode, in River Park Rumble, in the river on the end with the mine power-up, blow up the middle of the wall to receive a homing missile power-up

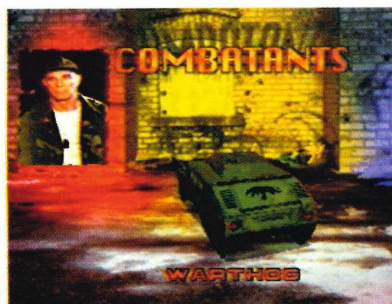
16 AVOID WRECKING THE PYRAMID

Pick any fast vehicle on the Rooftop level. Drive ahead of the pyramid and reverse really quickly. If you get it right, you will fall into the pyramid without having to blow it up

17 CHEAT YOUR PANTS OFF!

Try chaining passwords together, but always start the code with

WARTHOG
 When he was in 'Nam, he saw rats the size of bull elephants. Runty baby ones I'll wagger



infinite health or infinite ammo. Up to ten codes can be chained together using this technique

18 DEFEAT MINION - THE EASY WAY

In Rooftop Combat against Minion, go up the ramp and turn left. You should now be to the left of the pyramid. Drive full pelt forwards, and you should land on another roof if you've done it properly. Go to the other side of that roof and shoot at the hanging box. Drive off and collect the missiles and oil. Return 30 or more seconds later and it should be replenished with more missiles. Come back again and again, keep collecting those missiles and blow Minion into Kingdom Come

19 MORE USEFUL CODES

Unknown
 ▲, X, ▲, ▲, ●
 Rooftop with Minion and others
 ▲, X, ●, □, ▲
 Weird one
 ▲, X, ▲, ▲, ●

20 IF ALL ELSE FAILS

Leave the game on pause, hotwire the nearest car with an engine capacity over 1.3 and drive it straight through your television screen. Alternatively, drive it through the window of your local Armani dealer, nick all the stock and get your face on next month's Crimewatch

CONTRIBUTORS

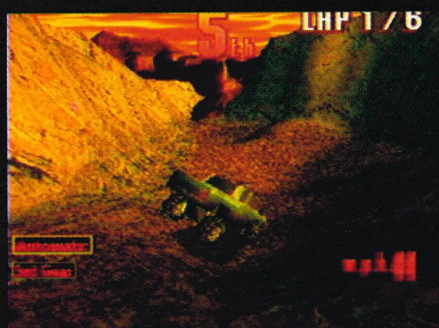
Liq
 Dave Engle
 Jin Kim
 Ace
 Mike Kz
 Scott Holmes
 Mr Krinkle
 Nick D'Orazio
 Ken Carty
 AJL
 Brak19
 Simon Rese
 Jonathan Kean
 e(NOS)codemaster
 Jim Gensel
 Figgy boy
 Jackson Haskins
 Kevin McKiernan



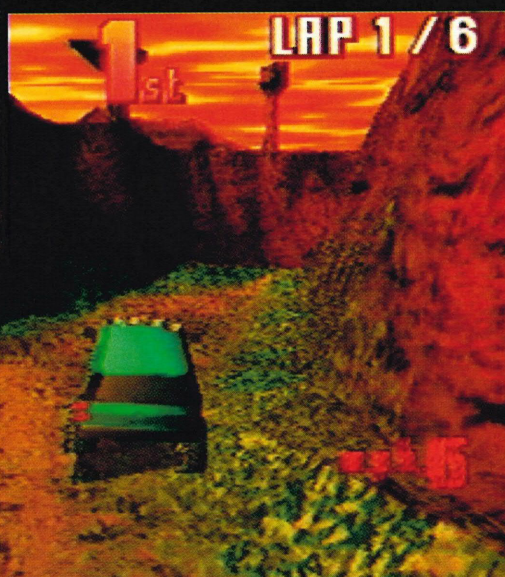
YELLOW JACKET Get away from me, you paedophile bast

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PRO COMPETITION

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BULL'S EYE

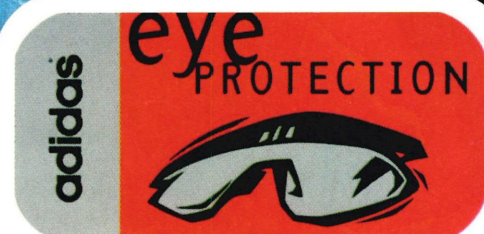


CHILI



HONEY

Adidas Eye Protection brings you fresh, dynamic, imaginative and original new designs. Each design suits blokes and chicks equally well. You could win one of five pairs! Peruse the range, decide which style you like and answer a simple question



BULL'S EYE

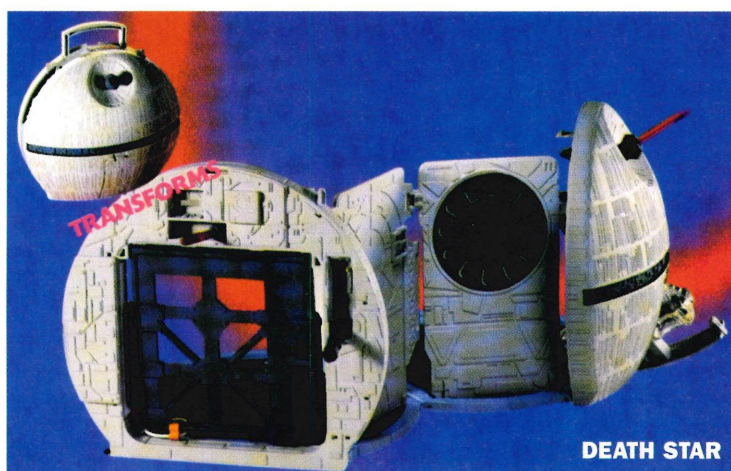
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DEATH STAR



for Christmas! value over £900!

Star Wars is, let's be honest, the best sci-fi movie of all time. Unbelievably, it celebrates its 20th anniversary next year. To pay homage to the ultimate space movie, we're giving away eight Star Wars playsets. Before you cringe at the word 'playset', please bear with us. All the PlayStation Pro staff are twenty-somethings who should know better but we all want one! The trouble is, we're not allowed to enter our own competitions so we've just got to suffer as eight of you make off into outer space with these out of this world ahem... playsets. Each playset opens into a dynamic interior-exterior Star Wars battle-action scene. Both of them include five brand new Star Wars figures and for those of you worried about the authenticity of it all, don't because the package design features the original Ralph McQuarrie artwork. The ultimate USP, however, is that both playsets fold up for easy transport to other galaxies!

ICE PLANET HOTH

The Ice Planet Hoth is a miniaturised Rebel Ice fortress with rotating gun stations, spring-loaded weapons and a battle-damaged snow speeder

DEATH STAR PLAYSET

The Death Star playset is a scaled-down replica of the Empire's armoured space station with spring-loaded weapons, multi-level play areas and Darth Vader's battle-damaged TIE fighter



BLADE RUNNER

Don't let any Indiana Jones fans kid you into thinking that Blade Runner wasn't Harrison Ford's finest hour. Or Daryl Hannah's for that matter. The best example of a movie adaptation of a classic sci-fi novel. Warner Home Video Price: £5.99

STEPTOE & SON

You've seen the re-runs on BBC2, you know the theme tune off by heart and now you can bask in the comedy genius of Willy Bramwell and Harry H Corbett's rag and bone movie-length features. At a low, low price too! Warner Home Video Price: £5.99

STEPTOE & SON RIDE AGAIN

Warner's Steptoe & Son Big Picture series continues with ...Ride Again, where Harold finds himself on the receiving end of some red-hot advances from big buxom blonde, Diana Dors, as well as investing in a dodgy greyhound. A classic. Warner Home Video Price: £5.99

UP POMPEII

Not only does Warner have the Steptoe family lined up for their Big Picture series, but it's also scooped the hilarious talents of Frankie Howard. Up Pompeii features big Frankie plus Patrick Cargil, Michael Hordern and Barbara Murray. Warner Home Video Price: £5.99

LETHAL WEAPON 3

So special is this '80's cop comedy starring Mel Gibson, Danny Glover, Rene Russo and little Joe Pesci, that Warner Home Video has deemed it fit to grace its Screen Classics collection. Re-released cheap movies at your finger tips! Warner Home Video Price: £6.99

GIRL 6

Spike Lee's bizarre tale of telephone sex holds a feast of humour for all who view, and showcases the acting 'talents' of Naomi Campbell, as well as cameo roles from the likes of Madonna, Tarantino, Halle Berry and Debi Mazar. Fox Guild Video Rental

THE ASSASSIN

Available as part of Warner Home Video's Screen Classics collection. Bridget Fonda stars with Gabriel Byrne and Harvey Keitel in this Hollywood re-make of Luc Besson's 1991 cult hit La Femme Nikita. Warner Home Video Price: £6.99

UP THE CHASTITY BELT

Another low price Ned Sherrin comedy classic from the Warner vaults, Chastity Belt again stars the legendary Frankie Howard. This time he's alongside the provocative gravel-voiced sex kitten, Eartha Kitt. Warner Home Video Price: £5.99

BABYLON 5 VOLS 17 & 18

Available as part of Warner Home Video's ever-growing Beyond Vision Serial Sci-Fi collection. Each video contains two full length episodes from the hit interplanetary C4 series. Warner Home Video Price: £12.99

Question:

Name a movie, other than **Bladerunner**, that Harrison Ford has starred in

Tick the boxes of the videos you'd like to go into the draw for

- ☐ BLADE RUNNER
- ☐ STEPTOE & SON
- ☐ STEPTOE & SON RIDE AGAIN
- ☐ UP POMPEII
- ☐ LETHAL WEAPON 3
- ☐ GIRL 6
- ☐ THE ASSASSIN
- ☐ UP THE CHASTITY BELT
- ☐ BABYLON 5 VOL 17 & 18

Adidas Question

Which bloke founded Adidas?

- a) Adi Dassler
- b) Rudi Dassler
- c) Jonathan Umbro

Answer: _____

Glasses choice: _____

Star Wars Question

Think of a more adult word for 'playset'

Answer: _____

Playset choice: _____

Name _____

Address _____

Postcode _____

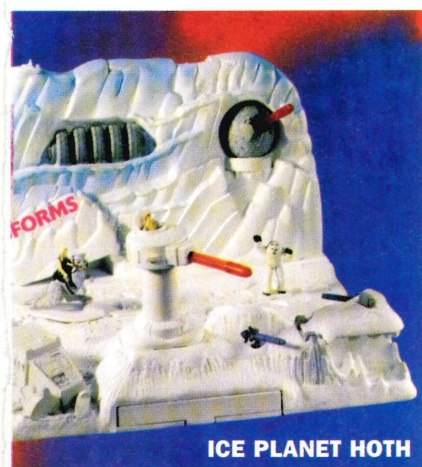
Telephone _____

Age _____

☐ Tick if you do not wish to receive promotional material from other companies

Send entries to 'Adidas, Star Wars & video Competition' PlayStation Pro, Freepost SK3038, Media House, Adlington Park, Macclesfield SK10 4YB

All entries to be in by December 31



PLAYSTATION PRO

RECOMMENDS

At the end of the day you only buy magazines so you don't waste money on one of the many sub-standard games already available on the PlayStation. And this is the part of PlayStation Pro that's guaranteed to steer you in the right direction. Every game available in every genre has been assessed and placed in rank order so you know exactly what's the best example of each game style

RACING



1 F1 APPROVED

Comes out just about on top of a very tough category. As realistic as they come, this is as close as most of us will get to a Formula One car without having our personalities surgically removed first.



2 WipEout 2097

Fast enough to satisfy the speed junkies and colourful enough to please the acid casualties. It's more sexy than the original in every aspect – especially speed. Fun, fast, frantic and full of space cadets.

3 Motor Toon Grand Prix 2

Much more bizarre than many race games, this official Sony release is unmatched in the sheer exhilaration stakes. Outrageous courses and a cast of comedy characters make this a winner in anyone's book.



4 WipEout

Futuristic race game with the difficulty level turned right up to maximum. Fantastic graphics, speed and soundtrack plus an amazing feeling of satisfaction when you succeed, make the effort well worthwhile. One of the best early PlayStation releases – a must buy now it's reduced.

5 Burning Road

This surprise offering from Funsoft shocked everyone by being (marginally) better than the much-hyped Ridge Racer. It moves as fast as most of its competitors, looks a treat and even has an air freshener that swings about realistically.

Also recommended
Destruction Derby
Ridge Racer Revolution
Need For Speed
Ridge Racer
Impact Racing
Andretti
Starwinder

SHOOT'EM-UP



1 Alien Trilogy APPROVED

Acclaim managed to out-Doom Doom and released Alien Trilogy to thunderous praise from just about every magazine around. One of the eeriest, most atmospheric games you'll ever play, and top of the sizeable shoot'em-up pile by quite some distance.



2 Doom

Still an all-time classic game, despite the somewhat dated graphics engine having been surpassed by other companies. As far as level construction and excitement go, it's still difficult to come close to beating id's effort.

3 Shellshock

Core's stylish tank-based shoot'em-up scored well on just about all counts. Utilising the same superb game engine as the almost equally impressive Thunderhawk 2, Shellshock provides a long lasting and varied challenge.

4 Krazy Ivan

There's far more to this than cheesy FMV sequences. Krazy Ivan is an office favourite and out of the early batch of releases this one probably still gets more play than any of the others.



5 Final Doom

While it doesn't break any new ground in terms of gameplay, the massive levels will have you twisting and turning like there's no tomorrow. The puzzles are more complex in and the atmosphere's a lot more extreme.

Also recommended
Viewpoint
Descent
Kileak the Blood
Raiden Project
Loaded
Black Dawn
Agile Warrior

BEAT'EM-UP



1 Tekken 2 APPROVED

A bit predictable, admittedly, but there's no denying this game's addictive qualities, amazing graphics and just about perfect gameplay. The acid test is to get someone who hates fighting games, get them to play this for a bit and watch them be converted.

2 Tekken

Only Tekken 2 is better and, to be honest, nothing else really comes close. Namco's domination of this market is almost total, and you have to wonder, when you've got one of the Tekken games, why even bother with anything else?



Mortal Kombat III

If we had a goriest beat'em-up category this would head the list. A more traditional style of game with some distinctly untraditional special moves. Tearing heads off with your bare hands isn't uncommon in MKIII, so don't say you weren't warned!

3 Battle Arena Toshinden 2

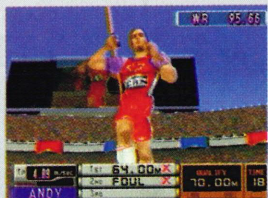
The pretender to the crown is basically a poor man's version of Tekken. Very similar to play, all Toshinden is lacking is a bit of spit and polish on the gameplay front. It's still great fun, however, although not quite the best in its genre.



4 WWF Wrestlemania

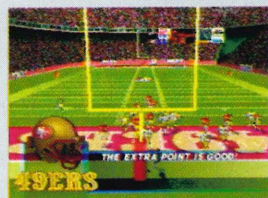
It's not sophisticated and it's not graphically advanced, but it's oozing gameplay out of just about every pore. Get a few friends round, load it up and you'll be clotheslining each other for hours on end.

Also recommended
Zero Divide
Street Fighter Alpha
Rise 2: Resurrection
Criticom
Primal Rage
JVC Victory Boxing
Darkstalkers



1 International Track & Field **APPROVED**

Possibly the most essential purchase to be released on the PlayStation so far. Fantastic multi-player fun, especially with the multi-tap, and an intriguing challenge for the solo player as you go all out for record times and distances.



2 Madden NFL '97

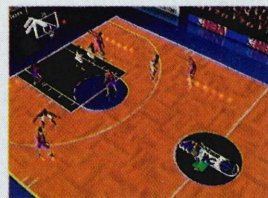
Without a doubt the best American Football game ever, on any gaming system. Stat levels are high but don't intrude on the excellent action that the game offers. Play it either seriously for a full season or just for a laugh in an exhibition game.

3 Olympic Soccer

It may not have the flashy motion capture of say, Actua Soccer, but US Gold's Olympic licence is certainly the easiest footy game to play and get to grips with. In no time at all you'll be scoring goals just like the pros.

4 NFL Gameday

Runs Madden NFL '97 a close second, and really shouldn't be discounted if you're looking to buy a game of this type. There's just about everything you could want in there and it's only second best due to poor presentation.



5 Total NBA '96

Sony shows everyone else how to do a basketball game with this stunning-looking recreation of five on five hoop action. It's not as instantly gratifying as Konami's NBA In the Zone, but does provide a more fulfilling, long lasting challenge.

Also recommended

NHL Faceoff
Actua Golf
Actua Soccer
Adidas Power Soccer
NBA In the Zone

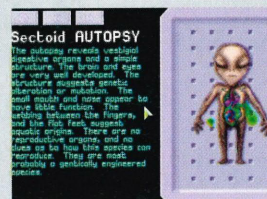


1 Worms **APPROVED**

Does wonders for the reputation of this much maligned genre by proving that strategy games can be fun. Guide your team of hermaphrodites to ultimate victory using missiles, grenades and land mines!

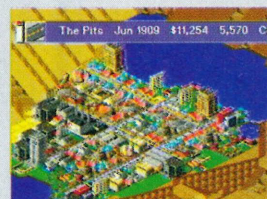
2 Magic Carpet

Bullfrog's unique strategy shoot'em-up is among the leaders, but even this isn't spectacularly good. However, it's still the best option for someone looking to utilise their planning skills.



3 X-Com

This perfect conversion of the popular PC smash hit caught the imagination of PlayStation owners not through its looks, but through its compelling storyline and thoughtful yet tense and exciting brand of action. Needs a mouse for best results.



4 Sim City 2000

It'd be nice to see an original PlayStation strategy game, because so far all the best ones have been conversions from other formats. This is another, and once again it proves that this type of thing can be done on this machine, and be done well.

5 Space Hulk

Subtitled Vengeance of the Blood Angels you'd think that this was far too exciting to come under the strategy banner. First impressions would suggest this as a lot of the action is Doom-style. But a strategy game it is, simply because if you don't employ a healthy dollop of thought and planning, you won't get very far.

Also recommended

Theme Park
AIV Evolution Global
Panzer General



1 Resident Evil

If an all-out gore fest is your type of thing, look no further than Capcom's incredible Resident Evil for your regular fix of zombie mayhem and puzzle solving. A genuinely enthralling adventure that you'll come back to time and again.

2 Fade to Black

The only fault any of us could find with Electronic Arts' French developed adventure was that it's possibly too hard for some inexperienced players. If you're man enough to see it through, the rewards are well worthwhile.

3 Alone in the Dark:

Jack is Back

In the mould of Resident Evil, but this isn't as good because it's a conversion of a PC game and doesn't make use of the PlayStation's technology as well as it should. A few niggles aside, it's got one of the best storylines around.

4 D

This is not for the faint hearted, or indeed anyone who likes to have some freedom of movement, because the beautiful graphics mean the programmers have had to restrict you to preset paths. Still worth a look, though.

Also recommended

Cyberia
Myst
Time Commando
Discworld
Psychic Detective

FLIGHT SIM

1 Gunship **APPROVED**

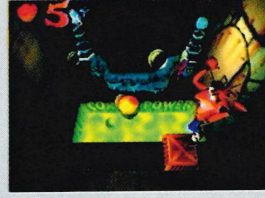
Simulation king MicroProse rightfully leads the field with this helicopter-based flight sim/strategy affair. It may not be the best-looking game on the PlayStation, but it is certainly one of the most gripping and most difficult.

2 Thunderhawk 2

Core has been the most consistent of the British publishers so far and gets another high placing, this time for another game using that impressive 3D engine. Thunderhawk isn't technically as good as Gunship, but it's a little more exciting.

Also recommended

Top Gun
Air Combat
Warhawk
Raging Skies

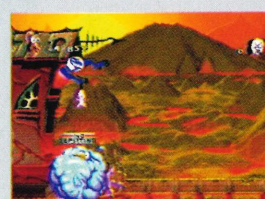


1 Crash Bandicoot

Each level requires thought, skill and plenty of patience, whereas the main bulk of levels swing wildly from one viewpoint to another throwing overhead, first-person, side-on and other crazy angles into your face stunning you into submission.

2 Rayman

With the exception of this game, the standard of platformers is poor at the moment. Plenty of people are busy trying to put this to rights, but for now Ubisoft's classic will fill the gap nicely.



3 Jumping Flash 2

Great fun to play, but still a little too easy and not all that much of an improvement over the original, really. Easily wins the award for most bizarre platform game, but doesn't really offer the experienced player a great deal more than they've already seen.

4 Earthworm Jim

Another game that doesn't take full advantage of the PlayStation's power - you'd be hard pushed to spot the difference between this and the 16-bit versions. But that's not to say it's not a good game, because it is.

Also recommended

Johnny Bazoorkatone
Mickey Mania
Jumping Flash
Cheesy
Floating Runner
Gex

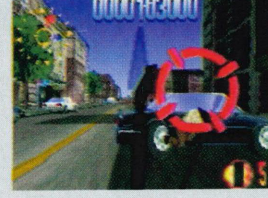
PUZZLE

3D Lemmings

There aren't all that many puzzlers around, so although this isn't great, it's still the best option for fans of more cerebral pursuits. It's testing enough, not only because of the puzzles, but because it's true 3D, and moving around can be confusing.

Also recommended

Bust A Move 2
Chessmaster 3D
Hebereke Poppoitto



1 Die Hard Trilogy

It doesn't do Fox Interactive's debut justice to stick it here with the pinball games, but it genuinely doesn't fit into any one category. A perfect blend of shooting (both Virtua Cop and Fade to Black styles) and driving make this a brilliant game all round!

2 Pro Pinball

The best of the pinball offerings so far. Empire's effort can be justifiably criticised for only having one table, but when it looks as good as this, and is packed with so many features, it can be just about forgiven.

Also recommended

True Pinball
Extreme Pinball

RETRO



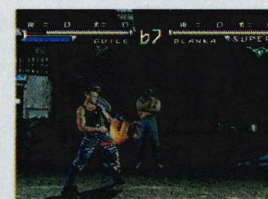
2 Namco Museum Volume 1

The better of the two Namco offerings so far, this one features some real classic arcade games. This retro stuff isn't to everyone's taste, but it does bring back some very happy memories for anyone old enough to remember these halcyon days of gaming.

Also recommended

Williams Arcade Greatest
Namco Museum Volume 2

GAMES TO AVOID



Aquanaut's Holiday Extreme Pinball

Street Fighter: The Movie Lone Soldier

Galaxian 3

Cyberspeed

Novastorm

Off World Interceptor

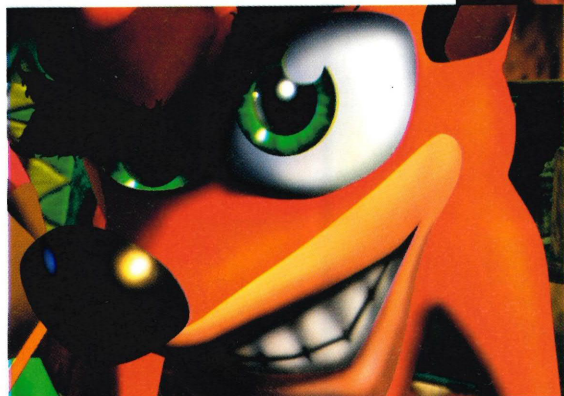
In the Hunt

Any import you haven't seen reviewed in PlayStation Pro

NEXT MONTH

Star Gladiator

Yes, I know we've reviewed it, but once you punters get a hold of a copy, you'll be crying out for a players' guide. So next month, we'll issue you with one. Okay?



Firo & Klawd

They'll be plenty of cat and monkey action when BMG's bizarre perspective cartoon platform blaster pops in to say hello

Crash Bandicoot

You've had the review last month, a top competition this month, now prepare yourself for a massive players' guide telling you all you need to know about Sony's platform wonderboy!

War Gods

GT Interactive take on all comers as their first fist-throwing bonanza barges into our office for a massive review and tries to pummel the likes of Star Gladiator and Tekken 2 into the ground

FIFA '97

EA kick off the winter season with the second FIFA PlayStation football extravaganza in as many years. We'll be taking you behind the scenes on this soccer experience, plus we'll be having a look at what else is on offer

ReLoaded

Gremlin hit us where it hurts next month, as it returns with a sequel to its 3D bloodbath Loaded. We'll also be hitting you with a full in-depth review



ALSO NEXT ISSUE

Pandemonium

The Incredible Hulk

Mech Warrior 2

Player Manager

Tempest X

Powermove Pro Wrestling

Porsche Challenge

Madden 97

Batman Arcade

NBA 97

Hexen

PGA 97

Namco Tennis

Duke Nukem 3D

PLUS

CentralStation – the no. 1 technophanzine for PlayStation culture – makes a comeback! The Pros uncover their best and worst Xmas gifts, a massive Tunnel B1 guide, plus there'll be loads of competitions, news, reviews and previews and the chance for you to speak your mind in our letters page debut!

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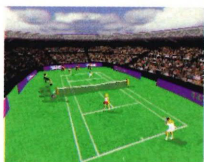
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